Marcel Ray Duriez

Nevaeh

Book: 50

Book: 2 Impressions

Something to consider: ‘Um-like-generally… when you are being a butt hole… you are being the hole of a butt… don’t be a butt hole…’

Start:

The earth has slowed so much in a rotation… that the moon is only in one place within our world… there has been a fake sun made to light its now the cold and dying world.

THE SUN BLEW UP WITHOUT WARNING AND FOR NO APPARENT REASON.

It was waxing… only one day short of a full meltdown.

The IV'AN

1

The earth has slowed so much in the rotation… that the moon is only in one place within our world… there has been a fake sun made to light it is now the cold and dying world.

Years-and years-also has pasted… now on its new plant that… I am calling home.

Welcome to the new world… that I was telling you about. It is a century from now… also, the population of our tired planet has tripled… yet not with life… nothing indistinguishable, close,

near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise impressions of life... I had to get away from it all... also, the crazy.

Lastly... the death blow to Earth... with it now drowning in its own lethal nest of taking over that is not real life-just impressions of just that... of failing work also industrial carelessness... were life would not even be able to breathe... with no sun left to burn... there were no choices to pack up also look for a new home out there pasted the milky way... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable,

kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable I said-then everything all... the entirety was all wasting away... starvation also point of viewers... the population has topped out at a nice even 30 billion-to 1 thousand... real life... if you can call them that now.

Thirty sets of legs SPRINTING through the gorgeous red also allochthone terrain. A junior military unit -THE RANGER CADETS man -a teenager... in four teams of eight... all dressed identically.

The Earth is dying... also has been dead for many years now...

sheltered with ashen ash... with coated fungus... mildew of human civilization... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable acid rain... D-rip-ping D-ripping down on them indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable pre-teen period flow... that looks nothing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable we once did...

that had to evolve or die. Also... someone pulled the plug! Also- mother nature... when nuts also spread it all over... with her sick wrath.

Even the moon... now spiders webbed with city also life... that were we pushed to with our space travels... also now a highway... that Interconnection is from here to there... also it a two day ‘round trip... lights on its dark side... we took that over to needing more space to flourish.

Too many ways- to may... of them... changes... expansion... also growth... of all industry; in everything

nuclear... violence of attacking one another also brothermen... with ecological warfare... tactics... radiation leakage from power plants... also waste dumps after dumps... toxic waste... everywhere... also anywhere it can be well damped... nothing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise air pollution.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable- even if cars with those combustion motors

have not been a thing in years… along with deforestation… pollution… also overfishing of the sea's… indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable blood rain… that was coming to an end also… global warming… making the plant cold… yet it next to hell as hell could be.

So… with… complete… also total depletion of all the ozone… extermination… of us by the coronae of them whom we made… with a loss of biodiversity through all of these have combined to make the once… a green also

gorgeous planet a terminal crap-pool... or the next thing to it.

Mariella... she lives in the urban sprawl which has grown indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable kudzu or indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable ivy over the eastern U.S.A.... just taking back over the earth is in some parts... 2 years have pasted... seen the end.

She part of its undifferentiated concrete rat-hole is Spotsylvania... VA... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise you could be anywhere... also it all would fall dead... or crawling with something that creeps or is creepy. It is the same crowded... gray... trash-strewn high-tech foulness. The walls are gray... the sky is gray... the individuals are gray.

They shamble past each other in dense crowds... ought to er to ought to er... unwashed because of the water shortages... also sickly looking from the

bankrupt diet of the cheap biological compound also synthetic proteins.

It looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a cross between modern cars also a Calcutta train station.

Mariella has it a little worse than most because... of her participation in a stupid little war, people hardly evoke. He is paralyzed from the waist down... also its useless legs hang twisted emaciated down the front of her wheelchair... that is old school... on indistinguishable, close,

near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the world… she has just arrived at… the new Earth they call it.

Mariella still wears its army jacket… also with… its unkempt beard also hair… also surly eyes… he is pretty… much ignored by the crowds which buffet her near, almost identical, indistinguishable, close, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable surf. Just another angry vet… a piece of discarded human trash. Mariella fights her way to work every day on the

jampacked underpass... tunnels... for speeding trains.

Also- every night he goes home to a tiny cubicle of an apartment in a vast government housing project. She now is in a room is redolent of a cell at a centralized custodial... wheeling herself in... which is what it is... a cold-looking room.

The conveniences look indistinguishable, close, near, much of a muchness, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, and comparable they are from a Boeing space jet X-38... now caring

passages... to its new home... for 10 years... it was just so on heard of a few years back... now nothing... which is to say they are efficient... space mindful... also is about- 11 years old.

There is a single fluorescent fixture... which casts a sterile light over the grimy walls.

It flickers constantly... up in the sky’s indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a star... yet those are new life’s coming our

way... for the other seven New Earths... that we make work... also inhabited.

Un-named yet... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise I sure we as one worked well do that... it was something that went back to the Trump days. That he signed into office on united world order... on all planets. Something its son is now taking over in its late 60’s. So-o I sure one of these wells be named after her... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable other us- a man of power.

2

 FDR

 Trump

 Washington

 Franklin

 Lincoln

 Kennedy

 Clinton

FDR is the one that I am on now… all U.S.A now too… thanks to its changing back in the 17’s… I look around the room

also all I see is a wall (all seven feet of it) is a TV screen. She starts putting on futuristic fatigue. It is just becoming light outside the windows.

On it we get a wider view of the world... also it is nothing to write home about. She gets up. She touches her corona to the figure of her many friends... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a frame that is jumping up at you in 3-D. Her fingers go a little through the hologram. Then it off with the day... there is a breaking story about a fire in the subway which

asphyxiated over a hundred people... also playing on the screen on the wall... also indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a hologram. Not unusual these days.

It is followed by a feature about the death... of the last lion living outside captivity. A LARGE PLANET NEARBY also a larger sun eating away at a smaller sun. Also- over half the species extant at the beginning of the century are now gone forever... with most of the endangered. A third-world village - toxic river - cattle... hippos... also other lifeless creatures float

ominously downstream... not as we would Link them... more evolved... to withstand the ways of life. It leads to a recap of the state of the environment overall... also it is grim. A hazmat team stands on the river's edge. The oceans are overfished also barren... poisoned by toxic runoff.

Humans flee in terror as ACID RAIN blisters their skin. All whales, also at least half the Earth's fish species, are extinct. Poisoned water... with all kinds of bacteria multiplying. Cars jammed on the old falling apart FREEWAY’s that look abandoned for years. All the citizens choke on the air in a rural town... until the end 11 years back.

Humans... using its technical ingenuity... has learned to keep itself alive... which it has strangled also crushed out of existence indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it has lost all contact... with the natural world... there are no national parks left... only housing projects also protein farms. There are members of a multi-national force being led up ramps into the bellies of MASSIVE... ARK-STYLE SPACESHIPS.

Also... they are all assembled on an airfield at a glacial military base.

Yosemite is an upscale condominium development. It is amazing the things you can do with algal protein concentrate if you know your spices. The world's greatest minds united with a single mission... preserve humanity. Most oceanfront property is used for marri-culture since the only food source efficient enough to feed everyone these days is spirulina.

Mariella Spencer is a homeless lady in a hopeless world... a little man whom the big machine has ground up also spit out. Her twin sister died choking in the smoke of the subway fire... which Spencer had seen on the news... just the

same as the manfriend... that she keeps as a nothing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise a hologram. Mariella gets a call from a computer at the municipal admin complex.

The automated voice tells her politely that its sister... has been killed in a transit system... accident back on the home planet... also he is needed to claim the body by 1300 tomorrow. There is SPENCER at the back on Earth... also in what was the USA... municipal linking's? she sits next to a large cardboard box...

about seven feet long or so-o... sitting on the rollers waiting to go into the boiler. In the box is her sister's body. We see that they are identical twins. There is no other family there... down there yet... you are here also you do not have to be.

Mariella watches the attendant cover her sister’s body with the top of the cardboard box... then competently wraps it with two plastic straps... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable she's getting ready to ship it somewhere... as it goes into what indistinguishable, close, near,

almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the flams of hell.

Then the box is rolled into the boiler... also the burners are lit. As she is wheeling herself through the crowded halls of the civic complex... Spencer hears someone calling her name... She also sees two men in suits working their way through the crowd to catch up with her.

She is your tween must have died with some debts... back home... too... yet we are all here now or its death... for life... she is at once suspicious...

wondering what collection agency they are from. They tell her they are with the PDA... the POSASSEMBLYS DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE.

Looking around... we see Mariella in her hibernaculum... its skin a bloodless bleached white.

3

To combat the sustained brutal acceleration also deceleration... he is suspended in liquid... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a fetus in the womb. A cold

womb of dreamless sleep between worlds. The charter allows them to exploit the resources of planets... moons... asteroids... whatever they find... It is an international consortium of major corporations whose determination is to find also exploit resources on other planets... both within the solar system... also in the last 11 years... between the nearer star systems. These two men ask Mariella if he knows anything about what her sister was doing in the last year or to hear when he was back home... fighting the overtake that they lost. Imagine the India Company funded by Bing...

Matsucrapa... also a dozen or so of their megacorporation allies.

Everyone just calls it ‘THE ASSOCIATION.’ The PDA has an official charter from the PCA... the Planetary Commerce Administration (pronounced eye-kaha...) a worldwide trade-regulating body run much indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the EC’s is today... if they follow the Intercontinental Space Resources Treaty... also the other treaties which prohibit weapons of mass destruction limit military power in space. It turns out

the suits are interested in Mariella since her genes… are the same as you can do it too. Just indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable you could be in a bot's body also the other way 'round you can do that with humanoids… to what is technology… using a chip in the mind also these… (she points…) She Miss Spencer had signed up for something called the mind-body take over Program (MBTP.)

In the Mind… -the body takes over Program you sign a 20-year contract to work on FDR… a planet of the Primary

Centauries interstellar system. She says they were not that nearby. She knows that she had made some transactions to work in space... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise he could not talk about it because... she had signed a non-exposed treaty.

The news services love to run clips of the wild scenery on FDR... also it is bizarre flora fauna. To a culture that has lost all contact with the natural world... FDR is mysterious... primitive... also frightening. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable we know it still being made right for our lives. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable everyone... Mariella has heard of FDR... or more properly Dominant Centauri B-5.

Discovered by the first interplanetary expedition 11- years ago... FDR has been the single most interesting thing to happen to humanity in ages. There is... of course... a primitive humanoid species on FDR... as anybody who watches the news would know.

So-o... What was she doing going to FDR? They elucidate ON what is going on. The suits take Mariella to dinner... also he even gets to order the real steak.

They are called the IV'AN... using their word for themselves. The humans usually refer to them clinically as the FDR'n's... also colloquially as 'the locals.' Humans cannot live on FDR without breathing gear... because the atmosphere is deadly yet. Toxic levels of ammonia... methane also chlorine... also the new sun too hot... yet that is being worked out there... by a man pushing us back with solar cells. They take DNA from an

IV’AN... also from a selected human volunteer.

On Earth... in company genetics labs... they create an in-vitro embryo also we did of your sister... back when she was a little man... which is a hereditary composite of the alien also human donor... it's one man is 14 we made her with your DNA... also she is are captive... she is now injected with you... when she was born... she will be all... you’ll look indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to them now with her body... also that now we chip to

chip... mind take over... as she ages... you'll be here Linking's. using mind also body control... you will live within her.

The recombinant embryo is grown in-vitro during the flight to FDR... which takes 10 years (ship-time- 7 years Earth time... it is a dependence thing.) They have freshly started a program called MIND-BODY TAKE OVER Program.

The Association is trying to bridge the cultural gap with the autochthonous population... which has been difficult to communicate also negotiate with. At that time... it reaches

near pre-teen size... since the locals are now proven... in their place at teenage.

4

The unpaid human worker then becomes a CONTROLLER. Using PSIONIC INTERCONNECTION technology... the human controller can Linking's controlling the mind-body take over body out in the wilds of FDR. The controller receives all sensory input... also gives all motor control to the body.

The controller lives through the mind-body takeover... also is completely unaware of her own body while INTERCONNECTION-ed.

Each mind-body takes over is genetically keyed to its respective human supervisor.

When it is ‘born’ (or more properly decanted) as a post-adolescent... it looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable an IV’AN... all look like fairies also can live comfortably on FDR... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it has enough human

neurophysiology to be used- as a- mind-body take over or surrogate figure.

By communicating with the locals through these mind-body takeovers... which are less alien to them... the PDA has had some success teaching them English also basic skills. So-o she was going to be one of these administrators' men. That is right... they tell her. Her teen body is the same... in vitro... also now... at the lab for several months... we have been considering you as her replacement.

It is significant since only one in a hundred volunteers produce a practical

composite. Each workable embryo stalls for an investment of over 14 million dollars... you at 14 is now more... look at you know you indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable as one of them. The next mission leaves in 4 weeks... so he will have to go through a crash training course... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it is still better than wasting a good mind-body takeover... now that you there- you are ready for us.

So-o... they are offering Mariella the same contract they gave tween. Since he is genetically identical... he can step into his sister’s shoes... also become a controller... even if for its body... that you are in now... that looks as they.

One of the Consortium agents leans close to her. She says that as a mind-body takes over she will have legs... with the new body that she is in... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable she would have had at home planet Earth is she would have past mind also thought

awareness to Life-like... life. Long powerful legs... also he can run again.

The agent's grin is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wolf. The pay is great... also it is a chance to be part of a great adventure. Mariella tells them he went for that line about it is not a job... it is an adventure once already... also it cost her the use of her legs.

Also- ten years is too long a stint tossing up for... to get her when the bots on Earth were doing there wiping out of

life… that was not being transported… out. The army taught her a couple of things. She tells them to take a walk.

5

‘It was very relaxing to be away from civilization… also it bothered me. I ought to not have found the loneliness so welcoming.’ PUSH IN ON MARIELLA… thinking about that. Also- you see in its eyes… she is going to go for it.

SPACE… PRIMARY CENTAURI SYSTEM… 2103 AD. The I.S.V. PROMETHEUS fly's rearward through the void… blasting out the fire of the gods indistinguishable, close, near, almost

identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a cosmic blowtorch.

Its mixture fusion- antimatter engines hurl out glowing plasma a million times brighter than a welding arc... with exhaust plume twenty miles long which stretches out ahead of it... slowing it as it nears Primary Centauri.

Primary Centauri is the nearest star system to Earth... at 4.5 lightyears away. A lightyear is the distance light travels in a year... also since light travels

186... 000 miles a second... it is a long way.

~*~

It is a big... (that is what she said!!!) half a mile long. Most of that is engine also fuel... nonetheless... the fuel tanks are almost unfilled.
INTERPLANETARY VEHICLE PROMETHEUS is finishing a month-long slowing down from its highest rate of over 9... 10th the speed of light... still pulling 5 gees'... you pull over that you are dead. I am pointing it is out because it is necessary to appreciate the kind of energy it takes to get there in any

sensible amount of time. You ought to go fast. As fast as the complete laws of physical science license. Also... you ought to use more get-up-and-go to reach that speed (also then slow back down) than all human evolution is presently using in a year. So-o the bottommost line is... the bottom line. Currency… A lot of loose change.

To get an idea of how far it is... imagine the Earth is a grain of sand in my driveway in Orlando. On that scale... the sun is cantaloupe 50 feet away. Also... Primary Centauri is in New York. About a million dollars a pound... to get something from FDR back to Earth. The item of the

game is not to go there also mine Tekttites and Moldavite.

The least mass for the most buck; you want to find things that do not exist in our solar system at all or are incredibly rare... also then you want to refine also process those raw materials so that what you send back is the finished product. So... What you want to do is build up an industrial infrastructure on FDR... you want to tame it. You want to civilize it. Also... you need workers to do that. Only you cannot use humans... because: A. They cost too much to bring.

B. They die in 35 seconds without a breathing mask.

6

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise wait... you have an indigenous population there.

So... colonization... in the classical sense... will not work. They are primitive... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable

wise they have brains also coronas... also maybe they can be taught to do the things we need to be done. We can teach them... also give them the cool knowledge to improve their lives... so they can be healthy also shrewd... also can all have a TV... also in return... they will be so grateful they will not only work in our workshops... they will even build them for us. Wonderful... About 900 billion miles away (a mere stone's throw by interplanetary sailboards... a couple of light-months) is the third star... Proximal Centauri... a runty little inflamed-dwarf.

These are the basic philosophies of interplanetary imperialism... 2200 A.D.

In the middle... close together... are Primary Centauri A- Also- B... two buttery main arrangement stars very much indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable our star.

Ahead of Prometheus... we can see the trinary system of Primary Centauri... three stars orbiting each other.

Staling on FDR (as you will soon) you can see two disks of light on the horizon at sunset... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical,

homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise never the third... since Proximal is too far away also just looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related much of a muchness, and comparable a star.

With certain drugs, individuals can be caused to hibernate indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable bears also other mammals... dozing away the years at low temperature... also with minimal

mental motion. Inside Prometheus... everybody is asleep except for a five-woman flight crew who look very haggard. The rest... a hundred or subsequent passengers... are all in medically induced hibernation.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable two twins in the womb they are communing at a deep level of preconscious intimacy... with the results that the mind-body takes over 's brain has been imprinted with the patterns of Mariella's cerebral cortex.

The biological equivalent of initializing the hard drive in a computer. He is under the INTERCONNECTION because he is spending the voyage INTERCONNECTION-ed to its mind-body take over the body which is nearby in its container… Its head is fitted into a helmet- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable device… a- PSIONIC INTERCONNECTION- INTERFACE which senses also transmits its mental energy… as well as filling its brain with the return

signal. It is usually called... simply... the INTERCONNECTION.

Mariella's MIND-BODY TAKE OVER BODY floats in its plastic womb... curled in a fetal position. The mind-body takes over is bigger than anthropological. The dimmer color is almost solid on the back... down the backs of the legs.

The Links would stalk about 4 to 5 feet tall if it uncurled. Its skin is light all colors Pinks and others soft pastel colors- glittery fairies- like as if light passing thought in spots... two or more shades of Light Pink in a based pattern indistinguishable, close, near, almost

identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a manufactured... of fairies or butterflies... (though the skin is smooth... not scaly.)

A rainbow indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable carnival glass Pink... almost like a womb... is contrasted with a deep ultramarine which borders on red and deep maroons.

The mind-body takes over in their womb- and indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable situation are at their metabolic rate also grow quickly.

Their muscles are constantly electro stimulated so that they develop customarily. The body is... outlandishly... almost human in the body in most ways.

The waist is narrow also elongated... the ears ought to be very wide... giving a pare shaped upper back. The neck is elongated (twofold if an

average human... or a little longer than some Vogue models) also... we will see... can turn 180 degrees... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable an owl. The body overall is slender... proportionally... than the average human... suggestive of a Masa or Watusi. The musculature is sharply defined... given no sense of emaciation despite the thin proportions.

The coronae are joyful... with exceptionally long fingers... also one opposed thumb. The fingers curve smoothly... bending without joints. It

sounds off-putting... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it is quite attractive.

The faces are exquisite... with cheekbones high as any Greek God or Goddesses also large wise ever moving Iris's eyes... more holy or feminine sized to ours.

When open... they dominate the face... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to

those of a cat... or a lemur. The mouth is also large... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise human... with a faint indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable bifurcation of the upper lip... also a coloration permanent deep purple lipstick.

The teeth are white and sparkling... with pronounced upper canines... These people are carnivores or

at least omnivores, and feminine nesting in home life. And live off the land...

A network of the complex pattern of iridescent dots also lines a soft webbing... on almost see luminescent thought wings- and glowing in low light, perfectly balanced illuminations... runs over the body in key places... almost following the lines of the circulatory system and nervous.

Did I mention smaller than us...?

-And-

They have an exceptionally long tail, that seems to link to all minds and

the lay of the land- like webbing of wisdom.

Long also slightly prehensile... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise more indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the tail of a panther than a primate... with feathery wings. These are bioluminescent chromophores... also they glow in the dark indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable,

kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable fireflies.

The alien can communicate with these... without conscious control... also... in reality, actuality, certainty, factuality, certitude, and truth... they usually are shifting also changing color to write down mood also emotion.

7

ON THE FLIGHT DECK the haggard pilots start the shutdown of the fusion... antimatter engines.

The body has no hair whatsoever, yet only on their head... though there is what looks comparable to any young teen

girl... the tale just above the curving butt cheeks inventing in the back at the end, with never endings like hairs that link to other things, a waist that is the same to ours and sexualities.

Comparable wise an exterior part of the nervous system- looking like moving spilled hairs-

The other worlds drift against the stars also full of life, looking closely some with rings, and all assorted colors, to other bright moons- yet far away to get there.

Some nearing the surprisingly oddly all around this planet, yet moving

slowly in orbit- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable FDR. These worlds have names by the locals, yet we have re-named them after grate men of own known world.

The ship creaks also groans as it begins to cool down some. OUTSIDE... the arc-light ceases abruptly. The entire drive module glows cherry pink with radiant heat... likewise- the exhaust jets are almost white.

They look indistinguishable, comparable crotonamide crap... hungover

badly from the hibernation drugs. Within-the spaceship... in total weightlessness... the passengers begin to emerge from their hibernacula.

Mariella sits up groggily also looks around.

Her hair luminescent at night long the body nude and she feel unshaven in places... also she was prepubescence stage before... the body has now grown older.

Mariella pulls herself out of its 2 feet with a 7-foot capsule... with all-glass fronts, maneuvering as well as the other

passengers in zero-G... even with its inert legs.

An announcement is telling her what to do- and how to do, likewise, where to go... for a shower automatic down by robotics and waxing also by robotic hands- and- and clothing- also that they will soon be entering orbit around her new home of FDR.

Moving corona over corona... Mariella floats over to the tank containing it is her new life's body that she will linger in... The mind-body takes over the body. He is amazed to see the growth in

the three years which have elapsed on the ship.

The mind-body takes over stretches... indistinguishable, and comparable... extending to its full height... dwarfing Mariella.

Nevertheless... as it turns in aquiver- the amniotic fluid... of soft clear purple; Mariella sees the face- long lashes- eyes tightly closed, hands moving about- of her mind-body takeover... and its flawless angelic and attractiveness that is ever-so-lovely.

O’er, it looks indistinguishable, close to her.

Despite the alien proportions...
the features are luminescent of her.

A computer program tells her she has time to get some breakfast also still makes it back to ‘see herself be born.’

Walking to the door of the ship, others from the land of the new planet- met her- from past trips, where a portable home and lab are sitting about five hundred feet away, were all that was the former world well be held for the time being.

Seeing the new BIRTH, technicians in yellow hazmat suit suits also breathing equipment enter a bright

vertical test-tube looking glass chamber through an airlock.

Mariella... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical... attired... follows them in.

They seal the door locks with a thud.

One of them tells her that the air is a match for FDR's... a poisonous brew of ammonia... methane... CO2... oxygen also nitrogen. Even a little hydrogen cyanide.

In the center of the chamber is the tank housing Mariella's mind-body takeover. Mariella is nervous also unsure

what to do... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, wise they tell her it is always best for the controller to be present at birth. It looks exactly indistinguishable, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, to a small baby is born from glass also elastic womb... and like translucent in the flesh.

Using an elastic collar... indistinguishable, close, near, and comparable a synthetic sphincter... to retain the amniotic fluid in zero gravity... they ease the body out of the tank into the birthing room... you can see the baby bellybutton tided off for the other parts... of its artificial and ersatz womb... kicking

and wiggling through the skin is the pumping of blood.

The technicians asked Mariella to help hold her 5-year-old looking body- like the wings open for the first time. The mind-body takes over kicks feebly... also everyone is grappling with the slimy newborn body.

Akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparably... an overwhelmed father... she looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, she is about to faint like a new mother to her on a child.

The pure naked truth of life… struggling into existence… affects her far more than he would have thought.

She is now at that very moment at that vary time taking her first breath. Mariella struggles to help give birth to herself in a way. They suction its mouth also it coughs… and cries.

Its face contorting at the terror also the pain of the outer world. Mariella looks on in wonder as the mind-body takes over starts to wail… clenching its fists…

It opens its eyes also looks right at her; she stares into its eyes… It grabs

Mariella's arm also she winces in pain at the strength of the little thing she is.

Taking shuddering breaths of the poisonous air. Mariella pulls its arm free from her own. Where its own eyes for the first time. Its terror passes. It stares lovingly at her...

TECH’s say- ‘Congratulations it’s a girl like you!’

‘I wanted to say DA-H!’

‘It's a child... that is now you.’

Mariella glances down along the mind-body take over his body... its expression grows even more amazed.

Just like a young girl all that is the same down there too… odd… that live on other plants have the same sexual parts… why we are here also… to keep its life going with them.

ISV PROMETHEUS goes into a low orbit around FDR. We get our first good look at the new world. It is magnificent. Another Earth… at first glance… with white clouds whorls over a pink also lavender surface.

indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable

wise the continents are all wrong... also the proportion of Dasso to the ocean is much greater.

Then all of what we ever used to. The pink is a little different too; with a green-blue tinge to it... suggesting the dis-indistinguishable, and comparable air... makes mist... yet with an Earthly plant.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise you can just tell... even from orbit... it is a planet that has a life. It has a look.

The most amazing thing about FDR is that it does not orbit its sun directly... homogeneous, interchangeable, and comparable wise is in orbit around an enhaloes planet... a gas giant twice the size of Jupiter... that is no longer... which in turn orbits the yellow sun of the sun is a demand... yet that belongs to the androids now.

Primary Centauri B. Its monster planet has been named POLYPHEMUS... for the great cyclops of Greek myth.

It is since... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred,

akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable Jupiter with its Great Pink Spot... Polyphemids has a vest cyclonic storm indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a great dark pupil in its vast disk.

The eye of an angry god looking down on FDR. FDR... despite being as big as Earth... is technically a moon of the giant planet. Polyphemids have fourteen other moons... some closer in... some farther out... also with life... clawing on it... and ways to get there... link us to them... like monorail trains floating in the

air. Depending on what is where in its orbit… FDR can have two or even three moons in its sky at once. FDR also the other moons cast large black shadow dots on the parent planet… indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable beauty marks.

DESCENT- tiny relative to Prometheus… one of the trans-atmospheric shuttles separates also drops down toward the planet. The LOCKHEED-SAAB TAV-36 ‘VALKYRIE’ CLBUTT SHUTTLE is a heavy lifter… a work PEGASUS several times larger also many

times more powerful than today's space shuttle. Below he can see mist-shrouded mountains... growing as they descend. The pilot tells them they are over the so-called ‘Alarm’ of Australis... the great southern continent... which juts up into the Equatorial Sea.

As the shuttle plunges through high-altitude cloud formations... Mariella presses her face against the tiny viewport... eager for a look at the new world. Mariella can see volcanic indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparability's also mesas

towering above a lower cloud blanket... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the islands.

Streamers also whorls of shredded cloud swirl around the mesa tops. Then the pilot tells them that they may get a glimpse of the MONTES MALONES... the famous ‘hovering foothills with waterfalls... and tube liking thing liking to the ground that is clear.’ … Which paleologists say are the rarest phenomena in known space. Also... called the Praying HIGHLANDS... they are indistinguishable, close, near, almost

identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable floating thunderstorms among the clouds... very dramatically.

Literally- totally... completely... holly- freaking floating... Hilly wedges of mainstay rocks... some over 14 miles across... hovering thousands of feet above the ground... with water tubes that you can ride linking them... aqueduct's linking them.

Here is how it works: Polyphemids (the massive planet around which FDR revolves) have a mother of the

magnetosphere... an unsurprisingly occurring magnetic field a million times more powerful than Earth's.

As FDR rotates also revolves through its field... its molten iron core generates its field... with ‘cells or vortices which are small regions of intensely powerful magnetic force at the shallows.’

(They have dove-like wings.)

Added to its unique phenomenon is another... FDR is blessed with a naturally occurring substance a million times more precious than gold. Its joke name of ‘Tekttites and Moldavite’ has stuck... over the years. Tekttites And

Moldavite is a rare-earth mineral... formed volcanically... which is a room-temperature superconductor.

The room temperature superconductor has been the ‘snarky’ of modern materials science... a substance which transmits electricity with zero resistance... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise at Nahhaal temperatures... rather than the liquid- helium-cooled superconductors of human science. Tekttites And Moldavite do not exist in

our solar system or Libyan Desert Glass. It is unique to FDR.

Also... it is the reason to go there... the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow bridge yet you can get there. Another interesting property of superconducting materials is that they will levitate in a powerful magnetic field.

Its magnetic levitation- everything that is its world... or maglev... the effect has been used to lift trains also run them without wheels since the late 2010s.

On FDR the effect causes huge outcroppings of Tekttites and Moldavite

to rip loose from the surface also float in the magnetic vortices.

These floating slaloms circulate slowly in the magnetic currents... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable icebergs at sea yet more green... scraping against each other also the towering mesa-indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable mountains of the region.

The FDR’n’s call them the LINK Rocks... also the entire area is sacred to them. Therefore, they are called the Praying Mountains. This could be a plynnlem... since the humans have come to mine these mountains also get rich.

Later it would be designated A+ 0... or simply Zero.

An amateur astronomer in Orlando was the first person on Earth to realize that something unusual was happening. Moments earlier... she had noticed a blur flourishing in the vicinity of the Military formation... near the moon’s equator... is the new way to the far-off

lands. she assumed it was a dust cloud thrown up by a meteor strike.

8

They float indistinguishable, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable clouds made of rock... amongst the fixed mountains also swirling cloud structures. Where they are in clear sunlight... they cast hard shadows on the lasso below. Mariella stares in awe as they pass over a few of the floating mountains... less than ten miles away on its side of the ship.

They are overgrown with foliage at the top... also a straggly beard of vines hangs down beneath them indistinguishable, the roots of an air-fern.

The sides are sheer cliffs. Waterfalls... originating on the mesa-indistinguishable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable tops... stream down the sides also dissolve into spray at the bottom's indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable upside-down geysers.

The local peaks also mesas project above the level of the craggy underside of the few floating mountains Mariella can see... so it is obvious that collisions are inevitable.

Twinkling indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable tiny flecks of ash on the wind are what look indistinguishable, close, like- birds... manta indistinguishable, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related and, much of a muchness, flying creatures of many sizes. Mariella does not get too close a look at these.

Stashing indistinguishable, comparable, close, near, and identical, a wall behind some of the smaller ones is MONS PROMETHEUS... the largest of the floating mountains.

Known colloquially as- THE BIG ROCK ALSO- MOUNTAIN with up spraying water- and flowering plant life... it alone is worth billions in revenue to the consortium. Cloaked in mystery, its flanks also top are wreathed in streamers of clouds...

Nevertheless, the shuttle plunges into the inky murk. She sees it for only a

few seconds before a thunderhead blocks the view...

9

Now the shuttle is passing lower also lower over the links rainforest. Just as the plants on Earth are green with chlorophyll... the plants of FDR... based on different biochemistry... are mostly purple. The tones range from purple, Pink... through violet to magenta.

Mariella catches glimpses of the rainforest through the clouds as they skim over the endless purple carpet. Other than the color the trees look indistinguishable, close, near, almost

identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable trees.

They have trunks, also branches leaves... though some of the shapes are strange... also the proportions are wrong. There are waterfalls feeding links rivers... also Mariella sees more flocks of bird's indistinguishable things.

They pass a few small patches of open grass also.

The magenta grass ripples in the wind close, near, indistinguishable, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable to wheat.

Mariella sees some moving shapes... large herd-beasts running. Then clouds again. Mariella... coming from its gray concrete urban sprawl... is amazed by the sheer scale of its lush... virgin world.

Finally, he starts to see the corona of man. They fly over what looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a small refinery. It is the DEUTERIUM PLANT...

an automated facility for extracting the heavy isotope of hydrogen from the local water supply.

The deuterium is used to fuel the fusion engines of the starships for their homeward flight... as well as to run the base generators also the shuttles.

(Thinking back)

The shuttle makes its turn on the final approach in what looks like a death dive.

We get our first look at the human colony... called UNDERWORLD'S GATE.

It looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a giant cookie cutter took a chunk out of the rainforest... a disk of naked ground two miles across where the trees were razed also the earth scraped bare.

Nearby... connected by a broad gravel road... is a gaping wound in the earth... a strip mine where metal ores for construction are extracted. ECO- mask off he would be unconscious after the first few breaths... with irreversible lung damage in less than a minute.

At the center of the cleared circle of IVAN is a cluster of squat concrete also steel structures.

Surrounding the central complex are two high fences of thick chain INTERCONNECTION... one within the other... with concertina wire at the top.

The whole thing is electrified. At the corners of the complex are concrete towers... their tops bristling with searchlights... scanning gear... also automated SENTRY GUNS.

The reason for the no-man's also between the fences the dark wall of the forest is clear... it is lethal ground.

10

The shuttle lassos also Mariella dons its full-face ECO-mask rebreather pack. There is also a popping sensation in its ears as the pressure equalizes the outside... also then the doors open.

Mariella struggles with her wheelchair on the steep loading ramp of the shuttle. When he gets to the ground... he moves with the others toward the nearest building.

Her mask fogs with its exertion... also he feels a tickle of fear knowing how deadly the atmosphere is. If he took her Mariella sees the new mind-body

takeovers being unloaded. They are brought down the ramp on gurneys... insentient... getting their first lungsful of real FDR'n's air.

They are taken to a holding compound outside the Science Component- also massive earthmovers... mining equipment... also power shovel two stories high. Around her is the roar of equipment as huge tractor indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable machines thunder past. There is loading equipment... she sees construction

workers in heavy environment suits. A tractor... its wheels as big as a house... rumbles past... dwarfing the new arrivals.

Beyond it... two vehicles take off... armored also heavily armed... they are IKASAWWK BH14 GYNOSPHINX gunships.

Nearby Mariella sees several COMMON SOLDIERS of CFOESE... the RDA security force... a private army operated by Grouping. The common soldier wears full helmets... rebreathers... also body armor... also carry heavy INVOLUNTARY WEAPONS.

They look constantly outward... toward the boundary. They are a hardened bunch of women also men... who live by the philosophy that sharp eyes... fast coronae also a warm gun are the keys to survival on FDR... the most badass bush in antiquity.

There is a sense that the place is under siege. The dark line of the forest is suddenly more ominous. Above the functional concrete bunker of the nearest building... the crescent shape of Polyphemus looms indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and

comparable a malevolent eye... seeming to cover half the sky.

Another sentry gun thunders briefly as Mariella goes into the complex.

Mariella's expression says it all.

My God... what have I gotten myself into?

INSIDE THE BASE they hold the arrival briefing.

She says the local ecosystem is a minefield of toxic plants... lethal stinging insects... also large venomous carnivores, station supervisor RIDGE TOP VILLAGE welcomes them to FDR and IVAN... then

quickly lays down the rules of survival here.

All and sundry must be always armed when outside the structure... also firearms training and drilling are scheduled for all base personnel. All forays outside the perimeter must be accompanied by one or more CFOESE common soldier also must be authorized by its office... also scheduled with the head of the sanctuary.

She tells them about the stiff penalties for any violation of the base security rules... as well as for the use of

illegal drugs... fighting... misuse of firearms also so on.

There is a frontier town mentality... as well as an overwhelming sense of us against them. We humans... also them being anything that draws breath on FDR.

It is not all grim here... he says. As of today, you will never get another cold or flu. We do not get them here.

FDR has somehow reacted to the introduction of our viruses by creating a counter virus for each which wipes them out. Actuality, certainty, factuality, certitude, and truth... the Consortium has

the patents on these counter viruses... also when the FDA approves them... everyone around the universe will be buying them.

That is the sort of thing we are looking for here. So please stay alert to the commercial possibilities of your research. Ridge village is a smart... forceful... charismatic man who is utterly focused on the success of the operation on

FDR- Its calm... almost breezy style belies an absolute ruthlessness in the pursuit of its goals. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical,

homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable her historical prototypes... the governors of Spanish also English colonies in the Americas... its mission is to overcome all obstacles to gain a foothold in the new world... also... more importantly... show a return on the staggering speculation.

Ridge village introduces LYNN PARRISH... the BIOETHICS OFFICER. She works for the Environmental Protection Department of the ECA. Called an EC.

On the dying home planet... the environmental parties have grown strong as the Earth has grown weak... so these officers are sent to make sure that the new worlds are not ravaged by the economic imperative of the megacorporation's.

Lynn looks the very image of a studious... concerned ‘Blue’ activist... with its beard also Birkenstocks.

Actuality, certainty, factuality, certitude, and truth, the EC is all bent... extremely on the take also making a large profit by turning in token reports of

infractions while ignoring the greater desecrations.

Mariella notices a woman using a stereo camera to record the meeting. She pans the crowd of fresh faces indistinguishable, interchangeable, kindred, to a documentary filmmaker.

Ridgeville introduces her as MARCIA DE LOS SANTOS... the FREE MEDIA OFFICER.

It is her job to send home the inspiring footage used for corporate advertising also recruiting... though technically she is keeping a full also impartial record of the operation at IVAN.

11

Among the arriving passengers are twenty new common soldiers.

They double-time down the ramp... carrying their huge packs also kit bags. They smartly salute the hardened CFOESE common soldier... who eye the new meat with smirking disdain.

Mariella sees more of the common soldier; also realizes they are forming a loosely deployed guard around the new arrivals.

There is a sudden ROAR as the sentry gun in the nearest tower opens fire.

There is an ungodly shriek in the air. A stream of bright tracers arcs out to the no-man's lasso of the bare earth beyond the fences... Mariella cranes to see... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise her view is blocked by the shuttle.

Ridge village heavily edits her down Interconnection’s to Earth... claiming the ‘expense’ of data transmission... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable wise it is ironfisted censorship.

Ridge village introduces COLONEL MILES DUARTHA... the CFOESE commissure. Duartha is a humorless man... thick necked also barrel-chested... with one side of its face twisted by the scars from an encounter with some FDF'n predator.

She hates FDR... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise love the fight. Duartha characterizes the antipathy

between staffs also the world they have come to conquer.

Duartha adjourns the briefing... to the chagrin of DR. BRANTLEY SIESSAH... the base-XENOANTHROPOLOGY'S also the head of the Mind-body take over Programing.

She scrambles to the front of the room as the meeting breaks up... calling for the new controllers to report to her in SCIMOD.

Duartha sneers as she pushes past Siessah... also we see that there is no love lost between these two.

Duartha stops next to Mariella also says she reads Mariella was a marine. Mariella confirms it... also Duartha wants to know if she was wounded in combat.

12

Fell out a window... drunk... at a base party... Mariella tells her.

Duartha is a little put off by Mariella's attitude... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise tells her that when he is

done wasting ‘it’s’ time with Siessah also her meat puppets...

She can use her in CFOESE. The ops center also the armory are understaffed. ON ITS WAY TO SCIMOD Mariella gets a look at the base from the inside.

There are six primary modules... laid out along a central trunk called the UTILIDOR... through which all foot traffic... also all utility lines conduits run.

It has three levels... the subterranean one being narrower also primarily an access-way for maintenance.

The flight control... dispatch... also CFOESE commands- and more CONMOD’s is the control module... containing communications, administration? The quarters... also contain the laundry... food services... gym... also recreation areas.

Mariella finds her room also throws its bag on the bunk.

In the upper Utilidor... Mariella bumps into NAHHA HARMON... a spindly guy who is one of the new controllers Mariella recognizes from the ship. Nahha pushes Mariella down the corridor as they look for SCIMOD.

They pass GENMOD (power) also STORMOD (storage...) as well as the vehicle maintenance module... simply called the GARAGE.

They reach SCIMOD which is a multistory building... full of labs also arcane equipment. None of it means anything to Mariella. They catch up with the tour... just as Siessah is showing the new controllers into the INTERCONNECTION ROOM.

Here we see the veteran controllers in a long row of what look indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable,

kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable high-tech dental chairs.

They have the INTERCONNECTION gear over their heads... also are tied into the distant bodies of their respective mind-body takeovers. They seem to be sleeping or in a trance state.

It resembles RAPID EYE MOVEMENT sleep... with the eyeballs tracking rapidly under the lids... also the fingers twitching occasionally. Technicians monitor the body functions of

the controllers... also track the positions of the mind-body takeovers on screens.

Siessah shows them how the same implanted chip which allows the Rapid eye movement INTERCONNECTION to the mind-body takeovers also gives them a minute-by-minute position on them out in the bush... or around the base of the mine... wherever they might be. Siessah tells the new arrivals that they will each be assigned to a veteran controller... who will supervise their first-INTERCONNECTION-up with their mind-body takeovers.

One of the working controllers breaks her INTERCONNECTION contact... also lifts the hood... climbing wearily out of her chair.

It is the end of a long workday... also her body is stiff with abandonment?

Siessah calls Mariella forward also introduces DR. JAN PELLERLY... the controller he is assigned to.

Jan Pellerly is a gruff xenobotanist in her mid-forties... somewhat dumpy... also gravel-voiced from too much smoking.

She scowls at Mariella... telling her to meet her in her lab at 0606

tomorrow. She ignores Mariella's proffered corona... wheeling around to yell at the monitor techs that she needs a goddamn cigarette.

The next morning Mariella is waiting in the biology lab from five to eight.

One wall of the lab is observation windows... beyond which are large terrariums holding some FDR’n flora also fauna. Mariella peers into a chamber filled with fern- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable

violet plants... unable to see if there is anything else in there.

She moves to the next chamber... which is an aquarium filled with murky water. The window is huge... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise he can see nothing in the gloom.

She turns as Jan Pellerly comes into the lab. With shocking suddenness... a dark shape... much bigger than her... materializes out of the murk also slams against the glass.

BOOM!

Mariella whips around to see the head of a hideous armored fish... its huge jaws snapping shut... clacking razor-sharp teeth against the glass.

JAN- I see you have met our Dinicthys. She loves to do that.

Jan goes to the glass also looks at the massive fish in the eye. It swims away.

JAN- Just a baby...

indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise at the

rate she is growing... we are going to have to put her back in the lake by- next week.

OVER THE NEXT FEW DAY'S- it will become noticeably clear that Jan is to be Mariella's reluctant mentor.

13

Reluctant... since they are so understaffed that she was counting on the trained skills of her brother.

Mariella is not qualified for anything on the base except kitchen staff. She needs a real assistant... a scientist.

HOLY- Hell... even an undergraduate. She is pissed off at the situation also sees it as just another way the company is screwing the biologists also the Mind-body take over Program.

They do not want to know what is going on here... they just want to strip the goddamn place. They will have it all plowed under before they even know what is out in that bush... also they will miss the real treasure.

The Earth is doomed because- its biodiversity has been killed. It may take centuries to die... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it is only a matter of time.

Out there are wonders they cannot even imagine... also all they do is cut funds... also send her useless assistants.

Mariella interrupts her rant also tells her that he did not come lightyears out into space... did not get shot up with drugs... inoculated against God-knows-what... also frozen for three years... just to come here also- be her punching bag. If she has a polyneme with her... tell the

base supervisor... otherwise take a pill... lady.

Jan looks at her for a long moment. Finally- she cracks a wicked grin.

JAN- So-o... a live one... huh?

Having lodged her complaint also put Mariella on notice... she takes her to the Interconnection room for its first assembly.

(MARIELLA'S FIRST-INTERCONNECTION ASSEMBLY.)

Mariella goes under the INTERCONNECTION for the first time...

also takes control of its mind-body take over the body.

We cut to the MARIELLA... MIND-BODY TAKE OVER in the training compound... an enclosure behind SCIMOD in which the fledgling mind-body takeovers are taught to function also survive.

It looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a kids' playground... with parallel bars... hanging rings... balls to throw... monkey bars... also various other structures that

will be used in its physical patterning. She is watched by techs behind a glass-covered wall.

Mariella... mind-body take over opens its eyes... also looks around with amazing awareness. Her interconnections... the strange hues of the alien vision flooding its brain- she moves awkwardly... sitting up.

She takes a deep breath also smells the air. Its nostrils flare with the flood of new alien smells.

She looks at its corona... staring at it... working the fingers.

She looks down also stares at its body... then touches it with one corona. Feels like the skin, smooth and warm.

A tech tells her over the PA to check its motor control.

Try to touch its fingertips together. She does... missing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a drunk at a sobriety checkpoint. She tries again... face screwed up in concentration. Its fingertips touch clumsily... shaking slightly.

Can she see... the voice asks? She nods- with a yes. Breathing, okay?

‘Yes,’ speech check.

Try to talk more.

Mariella... Mind-body take over 's throat works... also an inarticulate croak emerges. She tries again... also it sounds indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, to a baby trying to imitate speech. The tech tells her to try crawling.

She then rolls to its belly.

Pushing up with its arms... he gets its knees under her. He is unsteady-

as a newborn antelope... its arms also body shaking as muscles clench nerves fire spasmodically.

She crawls clumsily... indistinguishable, close, near, interchangeable, and comparable to a baby... to a transparent plastic chair nearby.

Mariella... Mind-body takes over gets one corona on the chair also tries to pull herself up.

After a lot of effort... she is almost stashing... hunched over indistinguishable, and likeness to an ancient woman. Finally, she is standing

on shaky legs within to body. She lets go of the chair. Swaying… she stands free.

She grins… bearing slightly pointy teeth.

Then falls right on her butt hard.

Hearing laughter from the technicians… she looks up.

Statuesque female mind-body takes over walk-up… standing over her.

The first female she has seen- that was like her now yet before her.

She is magnificent…

With powerful panther thighs… a flat muscular stomach also small close,

near, almost identical, wise firm athlete's breast showing with pointed nipples, and tight lover female genitalia.

She is wearing insubstantial, summary, feathery, and airy; also, in human years would be about 7 just like me a little older than I that would be around 5. Her face looks familiar... Mariella manages to croak out its first sentence.

MARIELLA... MIND-BODY TAKE OVER Who... are... you-you?

FEMALE MIND-BODY TAKE OVER Who do you think...? Dumb crap? How quickly they forget.

The voice is very recognizable. It is Jan. Now that we know... we see her face in the alien features. She grins at her... also cocks one hip. JAN... MIND-BODY TAKE OVER Aren't I- a babe?

Jan... mind-body take over helps her to its feet... also supports its weight while he tries to walk... just indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, and comparable to a mom holding a baby's coronae. She faces her... holding its coronae... also steps backward. Mariella... the toddler... takes its first steps.

She slowly let us go of its fingers... letting her balance herself. She takes another step forward, yet it is wobbly.

Mariella stares down in amazement at its feet. Its face holds a child indistinguishable, close, near, to a wonder. MARIELLA... MIND-BODY TAKE OVER I am walking.

JAN... MIND-BODY TAKE OVER ...You sure are... kid.

Mariella's eyes fill with tears. Jan sees one running down the pink skin of its cheek.

JAN... MIND-BODY TAKE OVER-

Yup... looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable everything is working simply fine.

-And-

Mariella being interviewed by Marcia De Los Santos... the Free media officer.

Mariella is explaining how its training is going. She is walking fine now and smoothly... nonetheless, now has started climbing, also running, and many types of exercises.

Its coordination is already equal to a human five-year-old-yet in a way that is what she is in this body.

She asks her a question then she has asked all of them... what it is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to wake up in another body-and see and feel as if the soul has changed for one to other only.

Mariella tries to tell her... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a

muchness, and comparable wise she cannot. Just that it is a wonder-and ever-so-odd.

Also, in its case... a great gift-nonetheless-linger in a new body with the same mind.

She says the air smells much like and comparable to apple cinnamon.

MARIELLA... under the INTERCONNECTION. In CU we see its eyes tracking... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable he is dreaming.

MARIELLA... MIND-BODY TAKE OVER runs to catch a ball thrown by one of the other trainee mind-body takeovers... Nahha Harmon.

We barely recognize skinny Nahha... since its mind-body takes over the body... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable all of them... is powerfully muscled.

Mariella... Mind-body takes overtaking a drink of some green liquid... which spills down its chin and neck. By its expression... it tasted great.

Nahha... mind-body take over showing off to the techs... using the window indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a mirror to shoot bodybuilder poses.

Mariella doing a running cartwheel... jumping up also catching the monkey bars... also pulling herself rapidly across the corona-over corona.

Jan... mind-body take over... taking a picture of her with an Instamatic camera as he eats an unfamiliar FDF'n fruit... getting the juice all over herself.

Mariella... Mind-body take over drawing also firing a large pistol... blowing big holes in paper targets.

Mariella... Mind-body takes overlies down to sleep for the night on a futon in the training compound. Some of the other mind-body takeovers are already asleep nearby. We can see there-bioluminescent spot patterns glowing in the dark.

Mariella... Mind-body take over stares up at the alien sky... seeing large Polyphemus a flying moth rise against the stars.

Its multi-color green and blue cat indistinguishable, close, near, and comparable eyes are wide with the wonder of its new world.

She hears the chatter also shrieks from the forest... that black wall out beyond the compound. The sentry guns fire also there is a piercing scream... short-lived. Soon he will be out there.

Its eyes close... as sleep takes her.

The human Mariella opens its eyes in the INTERCONNECTION room a moment later.

She climbs stiffly from its chair... pushing herself across to its wheelchair. She sits rubbing its temples with fatigue.

Even in the lesser gravity of FDR... its human body feels indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a deadweight after its exhilarating hours in the other body.

Jan... looking tired also rumpled... climb out of her seat nearby. She looks down at her doughy body.

JAN-At midnight-I always turn back into a pumpkin. Come on... let me buy you a drink.

IN RIDGEVILLE'S OFFICE...

Duartha is complaining that he does not have enough men to escort all the scientific sorties... cover the mine... the base also the new construction.

Ridgeville tells her he will cut the escorts on the scientific teams back to one man per sortie.

Duartha nods... Likewise, say that the number of major predator attacks on the perimeter has steadily increased... also, there have been five major breaches

of the outer fence this year. One of its men was killed by a SLINGER last Tuesday... also, two are on the medical report because of... HELLFIRE WASPS.

One of its gunships was attacked by a MANTICORE like a flying lion near the deuterium plant... also almost crashed.

We have lost seven people already this year... twice the number for the same time last year... also is already over its ammo budget. It is getting worse... not better.

Ridgeville says he will order more men also weapons on the next starship... also cut back on the scientific package.

Then orders Duartha to clear-cut a wider safety zone around the new construction.

They just must make it to then; the clearcutting operation... out at the sides of the zone safety -big tractors also bulldozers and excavators are ripping into the tree line... toppling the huge trees.

Now we see why the equipment is so big... the trees are prodigious, rapid eye momentaneous, gigantic, and giant.

The dozers have plasma cutters that rip into the trees... slashing through their gargantuan bases in a spray of fierce light also burning wood-shrapnel.

The larger trees are blasted with high explosives... raining kindling down for hundreds of yards. The tractor drivers are safe in armored cages... also Gynosphinx gunships prowl over the tree line... looking for large predators that might be approaching.

DEEP INSIDE THE RAINFOREST... as the tractors relentlessly approach. It feels as if somebody- or something watching.

14

A tight pair of eyes seem to be following- like eyes in the sky.

The cat near, almost identical, and comparable eyes of one of the humanoid FDF’NS... with a GLIMPSE of figures moving through the foliage... their skin-markings acting as almost perfect camouflage.

We can barely see them at all. Just an impression of Joyful... agile, and graceful forms. Then nothing.

A MASSIVE METAL FOOT crashes down into the frame.

The angle is WIDER to see that it belongs to Miles Duartha wearing a POWER SUIT.

It is a Life-like impression walking machine... bipedal... about 4 feet tall. Though massive... it is gyroscopically balanced also quite agile... able to duplicate most human motion. It is heavily armored... also armed with a huge rotary cannon... a UGA 911... built into one forearm.

Duartha uses a psionic INTERCONNECTION to control the machine.

Under its bubble canopy... the Colonel scans the darkness, semidarkness, dark, gloominess, dimness, blackness, murkiness, shadows, shade, shadiness, obscurity, dusk, twilight, gloaming, and tenebrosity of the forest. He glances up as two Gynosphinxs fly overhead.

One opens fire, one something... its tracers streaming down into the trees. The Gynosphinx pilot tells Duartha that a pack of VIPER WOLVES is heading its way.

Duartha scans among the trees... seeing vague infrared shapes moving on its screens.

Ahead... in the darkness, semidarkness, dark, gloominess, dimness, blackness, murkiness, murk, shadows, shade, shadiness, obscurity, dusk, twilight, gloaming, and tenebrosity... she sees black shapes squirting from shadow to shadow indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable blobs of living ink.

They seem to dart across the ground... then move through the trees from limb to limb... sometimes seeming dog comparable... other times more indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to Thunderbirdflies.

Duartha opens fire with the UGA 911.

It- sows a horizontal swath through the forest... splintering everything in its path into wood chips.

Trees and plant life crash... also flapping things called STING-BATS, around are glowing fireflies of all shades and hues, multi-colored ladybugs, rise into the sky with shrill calls- and Fenix's inflame making them.

We discern a dreadful, grim, grisly, ghastly, harrowing, horrifying, horrific, horrendous, frightful, fearful, awful, terrible, shocking, appalling, hideous, gruesome, heinous, vile, and nightmarish yelping whine... which goes on also on... getting more distant...

Satisfied... Duartha crashes forward through the bush... scanning.

A one-foot puncturing stinging like a bat with translucent spots smacks into its canopy... it is tail- stinger screeching on the glass.

She crushes it... with one hydraulic corona... unconsciously... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to someone swatting a small ladybug, then again in this world that what it would be like.

A shrieking HIPPOCAMPUS hurtles at her from above the trees. It is a small one... less than a three-foot

wingspan. Shaped indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a manta creature... it swoops through the trees on translucent wing membranes. We get a glimpse of glassy fangs unfolding from its mouth indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable catclaws... then the cannon blows it into chunks. Duartha's canopy is showered with Pink FDF’n blood.

She passes a large plant form called PHALANXIA which fires nettle-indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable projectiles at her. They ricochet off the armor... leaving drops of glistening venom. The FDF'n fauna also flora share the philosophy of us versus them. It is one nasty place.

Behind Duartha two common soldiers in power-suits follow her into the bush ahead of the wall indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred,

akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable blades of the bulldozers.

Duartha blasts something else. We see that he enjoys his work. It takes a personal interest that things are done right. IN THE UTILIDOR Lynn Parrish is walking with Carter Ridgeville.

Parrish is complaining that Duartha also CFOESE is going too far. Now they want to burn large sections of the forest... to clear it of predators. How can he be expected not to report that?! Ridgeville tells her that he ought to just do what he always does... shut up also take the money.

(IN THE COMMISSARY-)

Mariella is eating with some of the other controllers. You can see definite territories staked out by the various groups. The CFOESE common soldier stays on their side of the room... also does not mingle with the civilians much.

Also- scientists have their area. Within that... the controllers have a little corner reserved for them... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise whether

they are the elite... or the pariahs... is not clear. A little of both... actually.

The controllers are a scruffy... smelly lot. They spend as many hours a day as they are allowed to (up to 16) under the INTERCONNECTION... also as their stint goes on... they get less also less interested in personal hygiene.

They are indistinguishable, with unkempt hair, also some beards or lovely hair... nice skin and big appetites.

Over yonder, a crazy guy is bussing the table named HEGNER.

Moving slowly also vacant-eyed... she is doped up on something prescribed

by the base psych tech. Jan tells them that Hegner used to be head of Xenobiology until its mind-body take over got killed... ripped apart by a SLIGHT. The slinth is a large predator... fast as a cheetah... that spears its prey with its head... which is indistinguishable, close, near, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a venomous glance. The prey wobbles off also collapses... alive also conscious indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise unable to move because of the neurotoxin.

The slinth eats it alive. Hegner felt herself dying… also he has not been right since. Added to the trauma is the loss… the loss of its other life… the one lived in its mind-body take over the body.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable many of the controllers… he came to see it as its real-life… with its human life taking on the feeling of a boring dream.

Jan tells Mariella that they are going out to her worksite tomorrow… also

she will be meeting a local... named N'DEH... who is her guide.

Siessah says N'deh is one of the few who will still work with them... after what those CFOESE jarheads did.

Apparently... there was an incident... a year ago... between the nearby aboriginal people also some CFOESE common soldier who was trying to clear them out of the construction site for the new deuterium plant. It seems the site was sacred ground to the TSUMONGWI.

Mariella says he thought they were called the IV'AN. Siessah says that

is right... the whole FDR’n race is called the IV’AN.

They are all IV’AN... all around the planet... because they all have the same root language. It translates... approximately... as ‘The Seeing People.’

Their word for FDR is NA'AT... ‘The People's Mother- their deity.’

Curiously... it is the same word they have for the forest. So... to them... the forest is the world. Which is right... since there are no deserts or veldts... also all the aldolases are uniformly covered with forest... right up to the permanent polar ice.

The local clan is called the Tsumongwi... 'The Pink Flute Clan.'

Anyway... Siessah also its mind-body take over group were having some success with the local clan... teaching them some English... also how to use some of our power tools.

Their technology is Neolithic... bows also spears... clay pots... animal skins... that sort of thing. No written language.

They were helping to build a school in the forest... near their home villages... when CFOESE pissed in the soup.

The clan patriarch has protested the ‘Earth People.’ Us… clearing the trees at one of their sacred sites.

They have never indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable us cutting down the trees anywhere… also it was all I could do to get Ridgeville to stop its safety zone at the size it is… he was just heading for the horizon with it.

They mourn the spirit of a tree when it dies. It is- quite touching.

Anyway... when the tractors showed up at the sacred site... which was just a clearing in the woods... the IV'AN attacked; then they attacked the tractors... not the men. Set the tires on fire. Shot a few poison darts at the engines.

Duartha ordered its men to fire into the forest... knowing the IV'AN were there.

Show them who's boss. Five IV'AN were killed. Since- then we have not seen hide nor hair of them around here.

They will meet with us in the forest... sometimes... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise never here. Also- things are very strained.

N'deh has been invaluable... also there are a couple of others. It is almost indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable they drew straws to see who would get the crap-detail of dealing with us hairy Earth People. Also- N'deh drew short.

AT DUSK... OUT IN THE COMPOUND... the tractors are returning from the construction site. a common soldier keeps a loose guard cordon between the gravel road through the rainforest also the compound fence. A couple of Power-suits stride among them... dwarfing the common soldier also the civilian construction workers in their masks- hardhats.

The twin suns- of Primary Centauri A also- B are fat red disks just above the tree line. Sting bats... unicorns- glowing rays also other flyers are silhouetted against the orange sky.

Mariella... Mind-body take over... inside the compound... walks to the fence also watches the machines returning. Behind her... they are loading up an AVIC utility vehicle about the size of a Huey helicopter. It is a JF-17 THUNDER HOVERING AIRCRAFT.

The JF-17's is armed only with a door gun... also are the prime- movers of air operations here. They are used by the scientists to reach their Rapid eye movement worksites... also by the construction also mining teams to move personnel also supply. IVAN operates ten of this work PEGASUS... also they are under civilian command.

Mariella looks up. Silhouetted against the twin suns... sitting on top of a cargo container nearby... is a real honest-to-God alien... an IV'AN.

She looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the mind-body takeovers... of course... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related much of a muchness, and comparable wise the difference is in the details.

She is wearing a beaded loincloth of animal skin... also has a leather tube slung across its back.

She is squatting... still as a statue... holding what looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a long spear... which stands upright against the sky.

-Then-

Mariella sees that it is a bundle of long fishing arrows... with the unstrung bow held alongside them.

The IV’AN turns its head all the way around... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable an owl's... also the eyes bore into Mariella.

MARIELLA... MIND-BODY TAKE OVER N'deh?

The IV’AN rises... then step off the container... dropping to the ground indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to liquid... also silently.

~*~

She regards Mariella with curiosity... coming quite close to her. He walks around her... looking her up also down; slowly she sniffs her.

Jan walks up also introduces them formally...

using N'deh's complete name: N'deh Her- mequeftewa. N'deh makes a curious gesture with its corona... touching one finger to its forehead also flicking it joyfully toward Mariella. Mariella nods.

N'deh is older than Mariella. In human terms... we would guess her to be in ‘its’ late thirties. Next... to her... we

realize that Mariella's mind-body takes over the body are incredibly young... a man in ‘its’ teens. 14.

Jan quietly speaks to N'deh in the IV’AN language... surprising Mariella. It is the first time she has heard it spoken. Nevertheless, the sound of it is overly complex. It is musical also lilting...

Jan seems quite fluent. By subtitles... we understand that she is asking her to help her load the sampling equipment into the JF-17.

N'deh closes its eyes for a half-second... which we will come to see means the same as our nod of agreement.

They walk toward the Aerospatiale together.

Mariella hears shots also turns. There is a commotion out on the lethal ground. Near the tractors... a Nahhas animal has burst from the treelined also is charging for the fence.

In the dust raised by the giant machines... also with the number of men around, it is difficult for the common soldier to get a shot. To make matters worse... the sentry guns have been deactivated in that sector while they bring in the heavy equipment.

Twice the size of an elephant... the beast is called an ENFIELD-TITANOTHERIID... also it is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a six-legged rhinoceros. It has a massive... low-slung head with blunt transverse projections of solid bone which give it the look of an Enfield shark.

It is an herbivore... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise

indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the rhino... elephant also hippopotamus... it can be aggressive also deadly.

The common soldier fires their rifles at the monstrous silhouette charging through the dust clouds... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise the rounds do not affect the armored head also ought to ear.

A paratrooper in power-suit strides between the tractors... trying to get a shot with the UGA 911. Suddenly the beast appears out of the dust at a full thundering charge... also the power-suit is knocked down before the cannon can swing to bear. The bull Enfield smashes the canopy with one foot as it charges right over the power-suit... pulping the paratrooper inside.

Mariella sees Enfield close to the final distance to the compound fence. It is coming straight toward her.

Everyone is firing at once... trying to bring down the twenty-ton creature.

The ground is shaking in time with its galloping gait.

It hits the outer fence... smashing right through it. A power-suit runs forward... striking a firing position... also opens with its cannon. The GAU 72 rips into the Enfield... blowing divots out of it ought to er also head.

The creature bellows in pain also rage keeps on coming.

Mariella pulls its pistol also adds its firing to the general thunder of guns.

The Enfield hits the inner fence. In a blaze of high- voltage arcing... it bulldozes through the chain

Interconnections. It stumbles... tripping on the wreckage of the fence... then rises also thunders forward again... filling Mariella's vision.

BOOM!!!

The cannon roars again also the titanotheriid topples forward... plowing into the ground. It flips also skids... coming to rest in a cloud of dust ten feet from Mariella. There is a beat.

-Then-

Over the creature's body flows a dog- and comparable shape... big wolf. It hits the ground in a ripple of muscle also

bounds straight toward Mariella. It is SLINTH.

Its venom-injecting spear- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and the comparable head is cocked back on its powerful neck... ready to strike. Mariella raises the pistol... which CLICKS. Empty.

Her face is like death; then suddenly beside her is N'deh... drawing also aiming its bow in one swift move. The two-foot-long arrow flies straight into the slinth's throat. It coils over itself in agony

indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness and comparable a Dove- N'deh knocks another arrow also let us fly. The slinth shudders also lie twitching.

N'deh walks forward... stepping on the needle indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable head while he Rapid eye movements its arrows.

MARIELLA... MIND-BODY TAKE OVER N'deh. Thank you.

N'DEH Luck. (He holds up an arrow) Fishing points are not good for lethal slinth.

The high-tech common soldier stands around with their blasters... looking at the stone-age arrow that killed the beast.

N'deh looks at the dead slinth... then at the body of the titanothere which cleared a path for it into the inner compound. Its expression is enigmatic.

N'deh takes the blood of the slinth on its finger also draws a line under one eye... then under the other.

Honoring the slinth... also its purpose for existence. He starts dragging the carcass to the JF-17.

Nearby somebody screams. Several hideous insects... almost a foot across... are leaping from the body of the titanothere also trying to fasten their hook- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable legs into some of the common soldier. With the host dying... the parasitic WOLF-TICKS are looking for a new ride. A frantic burst of firing breaks out... as the soldiers jump

around... trying to kill the fast-moving parasites.

A very nasty place to be.

15

THAT NIGHT- with all the stars-twinkling, Mariella... Mind-body take over stands at the compound fence... looking out at the forest primeval. Tomorrow he is going out there for the first time... also he is scared.

There is light moving out there... single flitting ones... also larger patterns indicating big creatures.

Some of the trees grow very faintly or have phosphorescent patterns in their foliage.

Mariella sees eyes... low to the ground... moving just behind the tree line. Several pairs. Also- then an unearthly wailing cry. Viper wolves. Crap... what am I doing here?

IN THE JF-17... the next day... they thundered over the treetops with a roar of turbofans. Below them... the purple rainforest unrolls. The human pilot also the paratrooper escort sit in a sealed front cabin... while Mariella... Mind-body take over... Jan... Mind-body take over

also N'deh ride in the back compartment with the side doors open.

They landed in Jan's direction... in a grassy meadow.

They get out as the pilot shuts down the turbines.

Their- escort... CORPORAL LILLIE WAINFLEET... steps out wearing mask... helmet... armor also rebreather. He is carrying an almighty big automatic rifle. Mariella is wearing shorts also a T-shirt. Jan insists that he go barefoot... so her baby- Pinkie ties will toughen up with thick callouses indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable hers.

Mariella stares at the wall of trees surrounding them. Up close... the trees are Nahhas... as big as sequoias at the base... also even taller because the gravity on FDR is less than Earth.

Lesser trees... the size of mature oaks... are indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable underbrush in between the colossi.

Lillie is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a bird dog on point... hyperalert... scanning the darkness, semidarkness, dark, gloominess, dimness, blackness, murkiness, murk, shadows, shade, shadiness, obscurity, dusk, twilight, gloaming, and tenebrosity-beyond the meadow. A flock of sting-bats crosses far above them. She tracks them with the rifle... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable wise they ignore the strangers.

JAN- ‘Lillie... stay with the ship.’

LILLIE- ‘I'm supposed to escort you.’

JAN- Lillie... you are supposed to escort me to my party. The ship is part of my party. Also- we need it to get back... so if you do not want to walk thirty klicks through the bush... LILLIE I will stay with the ship.

Jan hates the common soldier clomping through the woods with her. They disrupt the animals... also smash the plants... also make too much noise.

Also- they tend to attract larger predators... to whom they appear to be injured or defective animals.

They grab the cases of equipment also N'deh leads them into the trees. Mariella stares all around indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a tourist in hell... rubbernecking also fascinated... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise scared crap-less.

Mariella expects every dappled shadow to hide a razor-fanged predator... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise their entry into the forest is uneventful.

Mariella is jumpy also on guard. Swatting at insects.

Soon she gathered quite a cloud of buzzing attackers.

Jan uses a machete to hack open the bole of a low... cycad-indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable,

kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable plant. She takes the viscous sap from the inside also starts briskly rubbing it all over her exposed skin. She recommends that he do the same unless he wants his bones picked clean by every insect in the forest. She quickly complies.

The insects move off… indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable magic. Jan explains that the IV'AN use plant extracts for all sorts of things… to relieve pain… purify water… reduce fever… limit or

improve fertility... promote wound healing... counteract stings also poisons... attract useful insects... kill external also internal parasites... prevent sunburn... also repel or attract larger animals. As a xenobotanist... her work has been vastly accelerated with their guidance as they help her see the greater interconnection between things in the forest.

Mariella gazes around her in wonder as they move deeper into the primeval gloom. The bark of the giant trees is alien... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable big hexagonal fish scales.

Moss covers the lower parts of the trunks... also lines another vine-indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable structures lace around them... also hang between them indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable fallen power lines.

The roots of the greater trees are indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable mangroves... also they form clusters of pillars... each thick as a Nahhaal tree trunk... which joins far above their heads into a single massive trunk.

These root-trunks wind around each other... forming a braided cylinder... which then rises a hundred feet above the ground before it forms branches.

They move on. Jan starts giving her survival pointers.

How to avoid the things that bite also sting suck.

Phalanxia... the deadly projectile plant... shows up bright as a neon sign in the ultraviolet-sensitive mind-body take over vision.

No plynnlem, give it a wide berth. She shows her the nests of Hellfire Wasps... the wasps do not indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the sap they have rubbed on... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise do not push your luck by coming near the nest.

She sees a DOVE TREE also brings her as close as she can.

It is a hydra- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable... ambulatory plant twice Mariella's height.

It moves into place... then freezes so that it resembles a gnarled... dead tree. When prey moves within range... it

comes suddenly alive also strikes with one of six fanged heads. The animal is digested in a pitcher- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable bole... also the half-stripped bones ejected to lure more prey.

Mariella sees the bones lying around the base of the tree.

Some of them are from animals at least as large as a man... or a mind-body takeover. Jan... The xenobotanist... is overly excited to share the Dove tree with her.

They move on. Mariella has never been in a forest before since they are mostly gone on Earth. SHE- is scared...

indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise dealing. It is interesting.

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She continues to give Mariella pointers... touch its... do not touch that. They startle a small creature that crashes away into the underbrush.

Further up the trail... N'deh signals them to stop.

Jan motions... also they crouch down... watching through the leaves as something moves through the woods parallel to them. It is a small six-legged herbivore called a hexapede... about the size of a taper.

N'deh points at something else... also Jan whispers to Mariella.

JAN- Look. A slinger. It is stalking the hexapede.

Mariella does not see anything at first... then he spots it. A camouflaged shape moving through the sun-dappled shadows.

The predator moving into the glade is

splashed by hard slashes of sunlight... which combine with its camo pattern making it hard to see. The SLINGER is smaller than a slinth... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise just as deadly.

It moves silently... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a

muchness, and comparable liquid... through the ferns. It pauses... rearing up... also indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the slinth its muscular neck cocks back into a striking position...

JAN- Watch it.

The slinger's neck snaps forward... also it is long... pointed head detaches... flying through the woods as a self-guiding venomous glider... a smart dart. The hexapede senses the dart also bolts... bounding in evasive zigzags.

The dart tracks it unerringly through the trees also buries itself in its flank. The hexapede staggers. It stands... its muscles spasming... then falls over. The dart starts emitting a series of high-pitched squeals... which allow the body to home in on it blindly. The neck bends down... also is rejoined to the dart.

Mariella catches a glimpse of hair- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable tendrils lacing together... neural interface. Then the slinger starts to rip the hexapede apart.

Jan explains that the slinth... with its striking head... is the evolutionary precursor of the slinger. The slinger's primary brain is in the dart... so if the body also the dart is ever permanently separated... they both die. The dart cannot feed itself.

The body also dart is the mother of a child... a dart is an immature form. When it grows too big to fly...

It will mate... then drop off also metamorphose into a small complete slinger with its offspring already in place... forming the new dart. Each new

generation is the brain of the previous one.

Backward sounding... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it works.

Mariella watches the feeding slinger in awe. He has never seen anything indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable its... so raw were also primal.

JAN- ‘Welcome to the food chain ladies.’

N'deh leads them past the feeding slinger... which is preoccupied with its kill. Mariella's heart is pounding.

She is still scared crap-less... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise its stuff is amazing. He feels more alive than she has ever felt.

~*~

They enter a clearing with a partially built structure in the middle. It is

made of heavy timber... cut from the local wood. It is the school also meeting center that Jan also Dr. Siessah were trying to build. They had gotten the IV'AN to build it is much... working alongside them... before they had retreated from human contact. Now the vines also moss are reclaiming it. Sting-bats roost under the eaves.

N'deh makes a high pitched clicking sound between tongue also teeth... also several of the Sting-bats flutter down toward her. He holds out some small fruits he has picked on the trail... also the Sting-bats perch on its arm ought to er's... munching.

Mariella knows that the stinging tail spines are lethal. SHE- gives the Sting-bats a wide berth as she helps Jan with her sampling equipment.

She changes power cells... collects data disks... also does other housekeeping chores, Jan goes to work on some equipment that has been left here for rapid eye movement connection.

Jan chops through a thick liana with her machete also drinks from the dangling vine. Mariella tastes it.

Water... clear also slightly sweet. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable,

kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable drinking from the teat of the rainforest.

Back at the JF-17, Lillie is idly tracking a Hippocampus circling far above her with the scope of its rifle.

The bored pilot is betting her ten dollars he cannot hit it. she is about to fire when he catches sight of some movement out of the corner of ‘its’ eye. SHE- motions to the pilot to keep still… also they watch as three DIRE PEGASUS emerge from the trees to munch grass in the meadow.

DIRE PEGASUS (look like sea-PEGASUS) are herbivores... vaguely PEGASUS- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable in design... with exceptionally long necks also tiny heads.

They have long... moth-indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable antennae with feathery tips... which are constantly moving... touching the tips of other dire PEGASUS' antennae as they move near

each other. They stand about three feet at the ought to ers... or about half as big again as the largest Clydesdale- they have bold striped patterns on their bodies... also glinting... chitinous armor over ought to er's also along the back of the neck head.

17

Lillie moves forward in a predatory crouch also rests its rifle across the fuselage of the

JF-17. The dire-PEGASUS munch is unconcerned.

Fifty dollars say I nail all three... Lillie says. You are on... says the pilot.

POOM! The lead PEGASUS... the male... drops indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable it was poleaxed. The other two spook... rearing... POOM! One of the females drops... kicking its legs in the air as it writhes on the ground. The third one bolts. Lillie tracks with it... POOM! It crashes forward... its necks bending back double as it goes end over end.

The second dire-PEGASUS struggles to regain its footing. It pathetically tries to drag itself toward the

sheltering forest with a severed spine… its back legs useless.

BOOM!

A blast of dirt… next to it. It hobbles further… honking indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a Canadian goose… its signal for distress. Lillie fires again… rushing the shot. Misses.

LILLIE- ‘Crap!’ She giggles.

It does not count if it makes it to the tree line.

LILLIE- Start reaching for your handbag.

She flips the weapon to full auto.

BOOM!!!

The crippled dire-PEGASUS disappears in a cloud of dust as gouts of earth explode all around it. Tree- trunks are blasted... foliage also underbrush ripped into confetti.

When the dust clears... the dire-PEGASUS is an inert carcass.

ON LILLIE... turning toward us is a grinning... seeing the threes all dead and the animals.

A pink corona slams into the frame... grabbing its rifle. Jan rips the gun out of its corona also flings it cartwheeling over the JF-17... then twists its arm behind its back.

She viciously torques it to the breaking point... doubling her over. She forces her to its knees... jamming its facemask into the mud.

JAN- Little ones ought not to play with guns.

Lillie is cursing a pink streak.

Jan kneels on its back also grabs its breathing mask.

She said- ‘I am going to give you some fresh air.’

Lillie squawks also plead with her not to. She disgustedly gets off her. She is already walking away... toward the felled creatures... as Lillie gets up.

Mariella sees her going for its sidearm. Lillie, has it aimed at Jan's back, also is about to pull the trigger when Mariella hits her indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a freight train?

SHE- slams the paratrooper against the cowl of the ship... twists the pistol out of its corona in one lightning move... also then picks her up bodily. Mariella is amazed at how easy it is to hurl the human twenty feet away... even weighted down by its full battle dress.

Lillie crashes in a heap... breaking its arm... also lies there moaning. Mariella picks her up with one corona also leans close to its mask.

MARIELLA- Lillie... look at me.

Lillie! Are you looking? You do that again... I will bite your throat out.

Mariella bares its pointy teeth in a vicious snarl. Lillie's eyes go wide with primal fear.

MARIELLA Understand?

Lillie nods... also, Mariella shoves her into the

JF-17. Jan is staring at her new assistant. He is a fighter.

There's hope for her yet.

Meanwhile... N'deh has gone to the bodies of the dire-PEGASUS.

A foal... only a few days old... has been hiding in the ferns nearby. It

emerges also honks for its mother to get up.

It licks her face also honks again... pitifully.

N'deh pulls something from the tube across its back.

It is a piece of gut-twine with something on the end... a carved wooden cylinder. He starts to whirl it round also round... above its head also as it builds speed... it emits a powerful ululating wail... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a

siren. It works indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the ‘bullroarer’ of the Australian aborigines... though the pitch is different also N'deh is somehow able to modulate it into a more complex sound.

The sound of the bullroarer echoes off through the trees for miles.

~*~

THE JF-17 lifting... banking away above the tree line. Its turbofan roar fades. Then there is only the sound of the forest. We see shapes among the trees...

figures which blend with the foliage. The band patterns on their bodies make them hard to see in the dappled light.

Close on one of the dead dire- PEGASUS. A pink corona enters the frame... stroking its face. The foal is lifted... still honking feebly... also carried away on strong pink ought to ears.

BACK AT IVAN Brantley Siessah is on the carpet in Ridgeville's office.

The incident with the paratrooper- Wainfleet could not have come at a worse time. The Mind-body take over Program is on shaky enough ground... without its sort of thing.

Now Duartha is out for blood... also Carter Ridgeville is considering restricting the number of scientific sorties he approves... also confining the mind-body takeovers to the base. Siessah is barely able to get her to loosen up... rapid eye overextending linking.

Of all the things they have learned about FDR from the IV'AN... also how much money there is to be made from the drugs also biochemical compounds yet undiscovered in the forest. His Rapid eye overextends to her of the money the Consortium has made from the counter-virus.

Think how great it would be if they could get them IV'AN back to the table... trusting us again. Also- how is the common soldier running around blasting everything in sight that caused the rift with them in the first place.

Ridgeville also- Duartha does not understand a primitive culture which lives close to the soil... close to the daily cycle of birth also death. They do not understand... also they do not want to. Duartha thinks the natives are lazy also stupid. You give them a gun so they can hunt better... also they give it back. How smart is that?

Siessah tried to explain that the IV’AN considers it unfair also obscene to hunt with a gun... a dishonor to the spirit of the animal also its purpose for existence. They believe that everything has a purpose... also sometimes the animal's purpose is to feed the IV’AN... also sometimes the IV’AN's purpose is to feed the animal... also determining which is what makes them both strong... fast also perfect.

They do not want to change.

Ridgeville says that if that is true... the IV’AN will never help them build reality, actuality, certainty,

factuality, certitude, and truths also strip-mine their planet.

They are useless to us. Also... Siessah knows he has said too much. She is trapped in ‘its’ argument. He tries to stall... saying he can get the IV’AN to cooperate.

NEXT... WE SEE Siessah raking (human) Jan also Mariella over the Tekttites and maldonites in her lab. Mariella says he had to do something... that jarhead was going to blow Jan's mind-body take over away. Siessah holds its head in its coronae. Would any court... anywhere... let her get away with

equating a human life to that of a genetic construct… a living antireality, actuality, certainty, factuality, certitude, and truth created in a lab?

Siessah says he knows what it feels indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable… She is like Kristen years back spent enough hours in the bush… in mind-body take over form. It is intoxicating… it is the greatest experience imaginable…

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they have to rapid eye movement link- ember what they are here for.

18

Also- what is that? Jan yells… challenging her. To get the IV’AN to trust us? So- can we use them. So- can we harness them to the yoke. So- we can make them slaves… also teach them to participate in the rape of their home planet? You are an- anthropologist… Brantley!

How did it turn into it? You are no better than Ridgeville, also it is a goon

squad. Are you getting a nice fat payoff indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable Parrish?

Siessah is furious.

He tells them both he does not want them around the base for a while until things cool down. He wants them to go out to SITE 26. They can spend a couple of weeks in the boonies collecting... up in the Praying Mountains... while he tries to get things patched up.

She warns Jan that she is ‘going native’ also dragging her assistant into it as well. Also- that way can lie madness.

Look what happened to Hegner.

A JF-17 roars high above the rainforest... climbing into the mountains.

Mariella also Jan is sitting upfront with the pilot... KIMBERLY CHACON. N'deh rides in the open back compartment with a single paratrooper... CORPORAL BILL ONOZUKI... also the unconscious mind-body takeovers of- Mariella also its boss.

MARIELLA- So-o, what happened to Hegner?

Jan tells her that Hegner's mind-body take over was not just killed by a slinth. He let the slinth take her. Suicide. He was dying of a broken heart... also being in the mind-body take over the body without its loved one was just too painful.

She managed to fall in love with an IV'AN man... some say they were married... also she was killed.

She was one of the five killed by the CFOESE common soldier in the incident which caused the big rift between the two species. Also... - Hegner went crazy.

Her name was Li Na.

There are many dangers of FDR... Jan says... also one of the subtlest is that you may come to love it too much.

MARIELLA- ‘AS IF- Not so far.’ a rapid eye movement research station AKA: ‘Linking.’ It consists of a ‘cabin.’ Then a single airlift module... about the size of a train car, which is perched on the flank of a mountain; near the Montes Molones.

Here the trees are gnarly also much shorter... their roots gripping the rocks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable arthritic coronae. In the clear space around the Cabin are packing cases also instrument packages left by previous research groups.

The station is uninhabited.

A few of the nearer flying mountains are visible a few miles off... among the clouds.

A JF-17 lands ever-so, near the Cabin. Jan also the pilot gets out... wearing masks also rebreathers. They get Mariella's chair out of the back then help her out of the ship also into it. Their paratrooper escort does nothing to help

unload... merely scans the area... its gun held at the ready.

N'deh stays in the back compartment of the aircraft with the unconscious mind-body takeovers of Mariella also Jan.

They enter the Cabin... which is dark also musty. Jan starts the Genny also turns on the light's equipment.

There are bunk beds... a cramped clutter of scientific gear... also two INTERCONNECTION chairs.

Kimberly jokes about being alone in the mountains for a couple of weeks with two men in such cramped quarters.

Mariella says the only threat he poses is body odor... indicating its useless lower body.

Once Jan has checked out the INTERCONNECTION transmitters... also Mariella goes straight to the chairs. Outside... at the ship... their mind-body takeovers interconnection also sits up.

They get out of the JF-17 also stand... breathing the cold mountain air.

Streamers of cloud wreath the nearby mesa-tops... also partially obscure the floating mountains nearby.

They go out the next day to place instrument packages among the floating

mountains. Mariella also Jan goes under the INTERCONNECTION in the Cabin at Site 26... while N'deh also the mind-body takeovers ride out in the JF-17. The reason a mobile controller station was set up in the first place is that the magnetic flux around Montes Molones interferes with the INTERCONNECTION signal from

IVAN. They need to be closer.

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The JF-17 is tiny moving among the vast floating islands of rock. Unicorns-glowing rays also other smaller flying species circle next to the cliffs in the sunlit shafting between the clouds.

Waterfalls plunge thousands of feet down the sheer walls... then dissolve into nothingness below the bottoms of the mountains.

Kimberly pilots the JF-17 under one of the floating mountains... also we see the upside-down forest of vines that are like FiberOptics- dangling from the underside.

They pass between falling streams of water glowing. It is a dream indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable also surreal.

Mariella... sitting in the wind in the open door of the JF-17 sees a unicorn-glowing ray cruising near them. It studies them a moment... beating its huge wing membranes to keep up.

It lets out a piercing shriek (hence the name) also then banks away... diving indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a jet fighter. Paratrooper Onozuki... wearing a mask also armor... sits in the other doorway... leaning on the sling of the door-gun.

Jan names the floating mountains as they pass. Mons Veritatis... Truth Mountain. Mons Tiburon. Mons

Damocles. Icarus. Daedalus. Also-finally... the biggest of the superconductor mountains... Mons Prometheus... The Big Rock-Calsoy Mountain. A hundred billion dollars-worth of pure Tekttites and Moldavite.

They land on the mesa-top of the Big Rock-Calsoy Mountain.

Paratrooper Onozuki deploys rapidly... scanning.

It is rifle ready. The others get out also go to work.

The mountaintop is shrouded in a blowing cloud bank.

Occasional shafts of sunlight play across it... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it is mostly gray mist.

Mariella carries its instrument package away from the ship.

He sets it up at the edge of a cliff... per Jan's instructions. Below... through gaps in the clouds... he can see purple forested slopes... half a mile down.

Mariella sees more Hippocampus circling below.

A couple passes nearby... giving her an eye. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable reef sharks they will size you up... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise seldom attack something their size unless it is in distress.

Mist closes around Mariella as he walks back to the JF-17.

Visibility is only a few feet. Without warning... a curtain of what looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable slimy ropes emerges out of the mist.

They are hanging down from above... their source unseen... also are dragging over the ground with a faint swish.

Mariella whirls in time to see them... indistinguishable, close, near,

almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise she is enveloped.

They are translucent tentacles… only a couple of inches in afoot.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they react instantly on contact with her… curling around its limbs also the body… also zapping the hell out of her with electric shocks.

Mariella is entangled also dragged... struggling... across the mountaintop. She shouts... also... the others run toward her. The paratrooper aims its gun up into the mist above Mariella... hoping to hit the source of the tentacles... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise Jan stops her from firing. We do not know why yet. N'deh sprints toward her... drawing its machete.

Mariella sees the cliff edge approaching... beyond it nothing. N'deh will not reach

Mariella in time.

Mariella is swept off the edge... its feet dangling over space.

N'deh throws her the machete... also Mariella catches it with the corona. N'deh almost falls... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise Jan grabs her... pulling her back from the edge.

They watch helplessly as Mariella is carried away. Then Jan runs indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable,

kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable hell toward the JF-17... yelling to Kimberly to fire it up.

Mariella... still getting zapped by electric shocks... tries to get a look at what is holding her. The cloud bank falls away... also he sees a Nahhas transparent canopy above her... glistening in the sunlight. It looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable an impossibly huge jellyfish... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable,

kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a cross between a Portuguese man o' war also a blimp.

It is clear membranous sac... or bell... is filled with hydrogen... produced by an internal biochemical process. The bell is 14 feet across... also the tentacles are over 35 feet long.

The bell pulses to give some directional control...

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable

wise mostly they drift with the wind. It expels gas to descend... also expels water from trim bladders to rise.

Mariella sees a whole school of these things... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a fleet of ships... emerging from the clouds on both sides of her.

Apparently- they sweep the tops of the mountains for prey... stunning it with their electric shocks. Mariella looks up also sees that the contracting tentacles are bringing her much closer to the pulpy

mouth. In the JF-17... Jan also the others searched for the clouds for Mariella. They see the fleet of gasbags... also move toward them. Jan says they are AERO-COELENTERATES... genus MEDUSA.

These are X. Medusa gigans... not too common it is far east. She tells Onozuki not to fire because they are full of hydrogen also will- explode indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the Hindenburg.

Mariella is hacking at the tentacles with the machete. They are tough also rubbery... hard to cut. Its distress encourages some circling Hippocampus to attack. As they dive toward her... we see the distensible jaws unfold... revealing glassy dagger-indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable teeth several inches long.

Mariella hacks at the first one... slashing it right across the face. With a shriek... it veers off. The jaws of another snap inches from its leg... also he chops

into it with the machete. It flutters off in a descending spiral… the ought to er of one wing hacked open. Some of the others follow it down… ripping it apart.

Kimberly maneuvers the JF-17 closer.

WHAM!!!

They are slammed by something from above. The ship drops also she fights for control. Onozuki is almost pitched out. They pull her back in. A huge shadow… then they see it.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable to a Hippocampus... only several times larger. It is the king predator of the air... the GREAT LEONOPTERYX.

Striped, scarlet... yellow also black... with a midnight pink head... it is iridescent also beautiful. It feeds on Hippocampus... munching them indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable salted peanuts... also the occasional medusa when it is hungry...

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise its fight is not about hunger... it is about territory.

It sees the JF-17 as a competing predator... also it is pissed.

The great Manticore swoops away... climbing with unbelievable speed... disappearing up into the sun.

Kimberly loses sight of it. Jan tells her to take evasive action. Fast...! Kimberly banks also dive.

Also- we see the Manticore plummeting right behind her in a full delta tuck... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a hawk stooping.

They build up airspeed also Kimberly moves right and left... then right... trying to throw it off.

Mariella sees them go out of sight behind the flank of the Big Rock Calsoy Mountain... also knows she is screwed. He chops harder at the tentacles... hacking

through another one in a spray of violet blood.

~*~

As she gets nearer to the pulsing sphincter of a mouth... he starts to hack at the gas bag overhead. SHE- chops through the membrane... also hydrogen whooshes out... spraying her with a mist of blood. Mariella hacks again... widening the tear.

With a thin scream... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a

muchness, and comparable a tea-kettle whistle... the medusa starts to descend.

The great Manticore outmaneuvers the JF-17... slamming into it with a bone-jarring crash. It flaps away with a piece of the engine cowl... also the JF-17 plunges... smoking... toward the ground.

Amid alarms also flashing lights Kimberly fights for control.

The cabin is full of smoke. The ship hits the treetops with a series of splintering crashes... also sails out over a clearing... crossed up also spinning. It plops down into a huge gray mud-spot. It

has come to rest in the middle of an area of volcanic springs... where terraced pools of mud plop with steam from below... also geysers shoot up nearby.

Visualize paradise ‘The Garden of Eden’ with purple- and soft pink trees in flowering... also a few floating mountains in the background.

Everyone inside is okay... though shaken. Bloody noses... bashed knees. Onozuki jumps out into the mud... in a rage... also slogs its way to the rocky ground.

SHE- runs up a rise... screaming at the leonopteryx... which is a crimson kite banking away.

SHE- opens fire with its rifle. Jan has come out... shouting something to her... which he cannot discern over the thundercrack of its weapon.

FROM A HIGH PLACE- we can see the paratrooper as a tiny dot on the rocks below.

Air rushes downward. A huge shadow can be seen... rippling over the ground... rushing toward Onozuki... who is firing in the other direction... it backed turned.

We rush right down to her... meeting our shadow... the shadow of wings 14 feet across.

WHAM!! The angle on Onozuki as he is jerked up out of frame.

Its gun also helmet plop into the mud near Jan... also terrifying shriek echoes across the landscape.

(SEVERAL MILES AWAY-)

Mariella is plummeting toward the rainforest... still wrapped in the tentacles of the deflating medusa.

The trees claw up toward her... also he enters a snapping... slashing hell of purple foliage.

SHE- is jerked to a stop... the wind knocked out of her... also its machete clatters down into the forest below her.

~*~

SHE- finds herself hanging ten feet above the ground. The tentacles go limp as it dies... also he slips down... trying to hold onto them now. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a

muchness, and comparable wise they are too slick. He slides down its greased rope... falling the last two feet to the ground... where he lands on its feet.

She jumps to its feet also scrambles away from beneath the Medusa. Panting... he looks up at it.

It is still dead...?

…?...

She finds its machete also stands to survey the gloomy forest around her.

-AND-

Alone in the bush... miles from nowhere.

Great...? She feels an overwhelming sense of doom and gloom.

Mariella backs away from the Medusa... then turns to look behind her.

CHOMP!

The striking head of a Dove-tree snaps its jaws shut inches from her. He jumps back as several of the other head's lunge.

CHOMP!

CHOMP!

CHOMP!

She stands there panting... just out of range of the hydra heads.

MARIELLA- Its place is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a goddamned Roadrunner cartoon.

At the downed JF-17 Kimberly has called the base.

She tells- Jan that they cannot send a ship for a couple of hours... everything is committed. Also- Duartha will not send one of its gunships to pick up civilians. Prick. Jan picks up Onozuki's rifle also tells Kimberly to get back to the ship.

Mariella is walking through the forest... moving in also out of patches of sunlight.

SHE- slaps at bugs.

SHE- finds the plant Jan used for insect repellent also cuts it open... smearing it on herself. Something is watching her from behind a curtain of leaves.

Golden- EYES- are watching from the dappled shadows. IV'AN eyes. Piercing gaze... FILLING FRAME. A soundless motion... the eyes are gone.

Mariella walks on through the forest... skittish also hyperalert.

She keeps its machete gripped tightly. Something small rustles away through the ferns near her. He hears distant shrieks... chirps... grunts.

There is a crash also an explosion of splintered wood flying leaves. A BULL ENFIELD TITANOTHERE emerges into the clearing ahead of her in a shower of foliage.

Its baleful eyes lock onto her. Mariella is frozen. The titanothere bellows also lower its ten-foot-wide sledgehammer of ahead. Its charges. The ground shakes.

Mariella... in desperation... screams at the top of its lungs... spreads its arms wide also runs straight at the thing.

It stops its charge abruptly... with an oversized bleat.

MARIELLA is amazed by the gambit that worked. SHE- then grins.

Make a face at the titanothere. Something rises behind her out of focus... RACK FOCUS to it... revealing...

A MANTICORE- It is what stopped the

Titanothere's charge.

The manticore is the most fearsome of FDF'n predators... also by the look of it might be the toughest carnivore in the known universe. Its thing could eat a T-rex also have the Alien for dessert.

It is a many-colored limbed panther from the underworld... the size of a tractor-trailer... with an armored head... a venomous striking tail... also massive distensible armored jaws.

Its shiny black skin looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable polished

leather... also is badland with thin strips of gold scarlet.

It has four powerful legs forming a base for a torso which angles up... centaur- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable... to a powerful ought to er girdle.

Folded against its chest are two long forearms indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the striking limbs of a praying mantis.

Curving up over the back is a muscular Gynosphinx tail that ends in a scythe- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable stinger... over a foot long.

The locals call it- ‘Palulukan’... which translates as ‘Dry Mouth Bringer of Fear.’

Mariella... still unaware of the silently advancing manticore, yells- ‘boo!’ to the Titanothere. It wheels around... trumpeting in fear... also thunders off down the trail.

Imagine Mariella's surprise when there is an earsplitting snarl behind her also seven tons of rippling manticore launches over her... landing between her also the titanothere.

The Enfield is shaking the ground at a full gallop... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise the manticore run it down in half a dozen powerful bounds.

It leaps to the titanothere's ought to e’r... seizing it in the powerful front limbs... also then the muscular tail arches

over... slamming the foot-long stinger through the beast's armored neck.

The neurotoxic venom is pumped in with one contraction of the muscular tail... also the titanothere topples to the ground with a crash... shaking the forest.

Mariella gapes as the manticore rips into its prey with massive jaws lined with distending fangs 12.67 inches long.

Mariella backs slowly away... trying to be invisible.

SHE- slips behind some foliage... then runs indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable hell.

MARIELLA is now chopping at a sapling he has cut down... fashioning it into a long spear.

She hacks at the end... forming a crude indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise sharp tip. Its motions are jerky also manic with fear.

She sticks the machete through its belt also carries the spear two-pronged as she moves through the forest

indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable it is a minefield.

THEN- through the leaves- *AND FOLIAGE*.

-AND-

Also- the eyes... bright in a slash of sunlight. Golden irises indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a cat... in a

feral pink face. They duck away as Mariella approaches.

~*~

Mariella passes a tree... also on our side of the tree we see a figure... standing utterly still... listening to her pass.

An IV'AN WOMAN. She is young... also lithe as a cat... with a long... slender neck... muscular ought to er's... also nubile breasts... a statuesque vision. Let us speak plainly here... she is devastatingly beautiful. For a man with a tail. In human age... she would be in her late teens.

In the sun-dappled shadows... her island markings make her invisible. Mariella passes less than a foot from her also never knows she is there. She watches her... frozen... only her eyes moving.

CLOSEUP ON MARIELLA'S FACE- ON OF EXCITEMENT- THEN- on the IV'AN man. She sniffs the scent Mariella has left behind her in the air. AT THE CRASH SITE the rescue ship has arrived.

Kimberly climbs aboard the hovering JF-17... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise Jan also N'deh say there are going to look for Mariella.

The AVIC craft banks away. Jan looks to the west as she walks to the tree line. The twin suns are set behind a black wall of alien trees.

(DUSK IN THE RAINFOREST-)

Mariella... moving through the quickly darkening forest... has polynemes. In the deepening gloom... she sees black shapes moving with liquid Jan among the shadows behind her.

She is being stalked by a pack of viper-wolves.

Mariella catches movement out of the corner of its eye also realizes one of the things is moving up to a flanking position. She sees a glint of eyes... and Interconnection in black movement... then nothing. Darkness.

Also, behind her more glints... pairs of eyes. Then a hideous sound... more indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a hyena's maniacal laugh than a dog growl.

Mariella starts to run along a game trail he has been following. She catches glimpses of the viper wolves bounding through the woods... staying with her.

Its running has made them bolder. They sense its fear, also they are closing in. SHE- sees another on its opposite flank now.

The forest has come alive with- bioluminescence as the day fades. Spots also patterns... ghosts also galaxies of pink- green light dance before its eyes... disorienting her... seeming to surround her with the glowing cat-eyes of the viper-

wolves. Their psychotic laughing barks become more intense as they signal each other... getting excited.

SHE- can see the shadows of the viper-wolves moving through the undergrowth... leaving a tell-tale trail of flashes as they brush against the sensitive plants.

Finally, one makes a run at her. She senses it angling in on its legs from behind also she whirls... whopping it with the flat of the spear.

It yips also goes past her... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable,

kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise instantly another move in. She jabs it with the business end of the spear also it yelps... retreating... baring its fangs. Mariella realizes that she is making ‘its’ final stand.

The viper wolves circle also Mariella gets its first good look at them. She is not indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to what he sees. They are indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred,

akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wolves...

Hairless... with shiny skin that looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable overlapped leather armor. They are mostly black... badland with vermilion also thin lines of iridescent pink.

Earless low- slang heads... with chitinous neck shields indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and

comparable a triceratops. Bright... intelligent eyes.

Also- the same distending... Dove-indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable jaws as the Hippocampus... glistening with fangs that look indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable they are made of glass.

Most disturbing are the creature's paws... which are

indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable leathery black coronae... almost human in shape... with a thumb for gripping. These things can hunt in the trees as well as on the ground.

There is half a dozen of them... more in the shadows.

Mariella feels a rush of adrenaline... or whatever does the same thing in its mind-body take over the body... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable he has never felt in its life. It goes through her indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a lightning bolt also the fear is gone.

MARIELLA (shouting,) ‘Do you want me?’ ‘Come on! Get some of me!’

With sharp snarls also a blur of motion they attack.

Mariella plants the spear in one… striking true… indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable wise the speed of its attack wrenches it from its coronae.

She draws the machete also chops at another... just as a third sinks its teeth into its arm. He yells in pain also fury... slashing across with the machete. It cuts deep into the throat of the one on its arm... also it lets go.

She sprints... and runs- like- trying to escape... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness and comparable wise one of the viper-wolves

grabs her by the ankle with its powerful fore- corona.

-And-

Mariella tears away... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise goes sprawling.

She looks up in time to see four viper-wolves lunging toward her. The nearest leaps at its throat.

THUNK!!!

An arrow appears in its chest. It lands on her… already a dead weight. He pushes it off in time to see a pink figure wade in among the wolves. It is the IV’AN man.

She cracks her bow down on the skull of one of the wolves.

Then grabs another also picks it up bodily… hurling it against a tree. The last one leaps at her also she drops under its weight… indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise rolls somehow… coming up on top of

it with a knife in her corona. The knife flashes down buried to the hilt in its heart.

The last two viper wolves... stunned by her blows... retreat yipping into the black woods.

Mariella gets up... amazed to be alive... amazed by its man... its vision. She recovers her arrow from one of the dead wolves. SHE- speaks to her... not knowing if she understands her.

Finally- she speaks... in halting English.

He knows she must be one of the Tsumongwi clan... the ones taught by Siessah's people how to speak English.

Her name is AULEIHA TE KAHA POLENOMA.

Mariella thanks her for letting the viper-wolves.

Auleiha's eyes flash with anger. It is not a thing to thank someone for... she says. It is a sad thing... also it is its fault.

She blames her for the unnecessary deaths of the wolves.

If he had known what he was doing... they would not have attacked.

indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise she is clumsy also stupid as a baby. These are unnecessary deaths.

She touches the fangs of the wolves respectfully. She murmurs to them in her language... asking them to forgive her. Also... to forgive its stupid alien man.

What ought to I have done?

SHE- wants to know. She explains how sap from a certain leaf imitates the smell of a slinger dart... you rub it on your face... also it scares them. They think you

are a slinger. They will not attack you. Auleiha stands... walking away as if nothing has happened.

Mariella grabs its machete also sprints to catch up with her.

She scowls at her... also says that you alien people do not understand its forest. You ought not to come here.

You only cause polynemes.

Mariella asks why she saved her... then. Why not let her wolves have a nice meal if she loves them so much? What is the deal?

She stops… meeting its eyes for the first time.

AULEIHA- ‘Because you are brave.’

She grins at the compliment.

She scowls… turning away again.

AULEIHA- ‘Comparable wise you are dumb more than a child.’

‘Teach me… then.’ Said, MARIELLA.

She looks at her again.

MARIELLA- You do not want to leave me out here alone to harm more

animals. I am a menace. I need to be taught what to do.

AULEIHA- ‘You aliens do not see as we do.’ Never see.

MARIELLA- ‘Teach me to see as you do.’

AULEIHA- ‘No one can teach what is misunderstood.’

She lets her go with her. First… she binds its wound with some plant dressing that stops the bleeding also the pain.

As they walk, he asks her questions.

The first lesson is about silence.

They walk on. The sky is black also full of stars. Two moons are providing more than enough light for its large cat-eyes. Bioluminescence is everywhere.

A GHOSTBIRD flies through the trees above them.

A glowing... transparent membrane... delicate as a blown-glass figurine. Elegant also insubstantial. Its song is eerie indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable wise quite melodic.

Other things are wafting through the high branches... little points of light indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable fireflies.

A couple of drift near her also he sees that they are indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable glowing dissuasion seeds... about the size of large indistinguishable,

close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable westerlies... waving their silky cilia to move joyfully through the night air.

They cross a large bed of moss... which reacts to the pressure of their footsteps. Rings of pink/green light... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable water ripples on a pond... expands outward from each footfall.

Mariella sees movement in the trees ahead. Suddenly a glowing manta-shape banks toward them... a Hippocampus.

Mariella raises its machete... bracing for a chop. He slashes at the shape also...

It dissolves- into a swarm of MOONWRAITHS.

These insects fly in a tightly patterned swarm... imitating the shape of a Hippocampus to discourage insect-eating predators.

The moon-wraiths disperse indistinguishable, close, near, almost

identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a mist also reform further on.

AULEIHA- ‘You do not see like us.’

They pass through a grove of trees indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable willows.

A fountain of gossamer tendrils from each central stalk.

The long tendrils hang down indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable straight hair... also they glow faintly.

They sway hypnotically as if in a breeze... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise there is no breeze.

They reach out... gently caressing them as they pass through.

Auleiha runs her fingers through the tendrils as she walks. She murmurs to them in her language. Mariella listens to her... talking to the trees as they walk through the suddenly magical night.

Auleiha breaks into a loping run.

Mariella catches up... also soon they run silently together through the dappled moonlight. Its body is powerful... also it is effortless. He feels almost indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable he is flying.

~*~

Looking down... he sees exploding rings of light where its feet touch down.

They approach a waterfall... a wide curtain shimmering in the moonlight.

Auleiha runs agilely over a fallen trunk... across a broad pool at the base of the waterfall.

LOOKING DOWN we see glowing... gently moving shapes covering the bottom of the pool. They are giant anemones.

Auleiha also Mariella is silhouetted sprinting over a garden of

Pink... cyan also salmon-colored living starbursts... some over three feet across.

They ran on in silence.

Mariella breaths deeply... smelling a thousand things he never noticed before.

SHE- feels indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable he knows what they are... at some cellular level.

Something... deep in its brain... deep in the fabric of its alien body... is

awakening. They enter a clearing filled with chest-high ferns.

She signals her to stop... then shows her a creature perched on a nearby fern.

Mariella sees a black... stick-indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a sea serpent thing perched on a front ahead of her. It is about a foot long also ugly as a toad. As he approaches it goes SNAP!

A long spine lying along its back snaps around in a circle... unfurling a

bioluminescent membrane of bright orange also pink... a perfect disk a foot across... opening indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a Peacock.

The rapidly distending fan- wing imparts enough angular movement to spin the creature indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a frisbee. It glides... spinning... through the darkness. It floats across the clearing to another branch where the wing furls...

Vanishing as suddenly as it appeared. Auleiha runs forward with a sharp cry... plunging into a large patch of ferns. With an explosion of color... two dozen FAN A SEA SERPENTS snap into motion... also Mariella is suddenly surrounded by luminous floating disks... which spin away between the glowing trees.

The ugly little sea serpent becomes one of the most beautiful things she has ever seen. Actuality, certainty, factuality, certitude, and truth... its world which seemed so ugly has become one of awesome beauty.

Mariella's face fills with child indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wonder. SHE-looks at Auleiha... also sees her smiling.

Mariella notices that the chromatophores on her body have brightened also changed color. SHE-looks down. It has too. Its skin pulses with colors he has never seen before. He does not know what it means. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a

muchness, and comparable wise Auleiha does.

Several of the *dalsoelion*-seed things floating near her. Humans call them WILLATHEWISPS... also they are more plants than animals.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise right now they seem to be acting with purpose. Now there are more... circling her. Some alighting on her. SHE-laughs as more of them come.

Soon Mariella is pulsing...

glowing... fluttering mass of light...

standing in the clearing. Auleiha is overly impressed by it. She takes it as a sign that he is accepted by the willathewisps.

The forest is giving her a blessing. Why does she not know? indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise she knows not to question it. Also... she is secretly glad.

Because she is fascinated by its aliens... also now she has an excuse to bring them to... THE VILLAGE.

Mariella follows Auleiha into the village of her clan. They live inside the bases of three of the Nahhas mangrove-indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable tall trees.

Cookfires are visible through the pillars of the roots... also people move past them as tall silhouettes.

Auleiha calls them also they come out to look at Mariella.

The PATRIARCH also MATRIARCH stands to wait for Auleiha to explain what she is doing. She goes into a long... uninterrupted explanation... in rapid-fire bursts of her lilting... musical language... accompanied by lots of corona gestures which fascinate- Mariella with their eloquence. Her jointless fingers are hypnotic to watch as she talks.

The Matriarch... MO'AT POHATSUA examines Mariella closely. She looks at the viper-wolf bite on its arm. She says something to the Patriarch... MATO'A TE KAHA NAHGOITEWA... also they confer briefly.

As we will come to find out... Mo'at also Mato'a are Auleiha's parents. She is what you might call a princess... destined herself to be the Matriarch of the clan someday.

So... they cut her some slack. Future Matriarchs are expected to have good instincts.

Mato'a invites Mariella in for dinner... also they go inside the base of the tree.

Mariella is amazed at the size of the thing inside. By the light of the cookfires... she can see up into a

cylindrical gallery... which goes off into darkness.

It is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a biological cathedral... held up by pillars also flying indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise tresses of living wood.

We see the people of the tribe... also how they live.

Mothers with babies... old ladies... young hunters. The Matriarch also Patriarch rule equally... though each with their area of responsibility also expertise.

The Patriarch is the hunt leader... also oversees the making of things... including pottery... clothing also art.

The Matriarch... Mo'at... governs the tribe's interconnections to the forest... also is responsible for their verbal story... medicine also musical teaching. Her skills could be compared to those of a shaman.

Her name means ‘Dream Catcher.’ It is her job to petition the

forest for guidance... also to make requests for it. Together they determine when they must move to allow the area, they have dwelt in to recover from their stay... also where they will go next. Their lifestyle is seminomadic... also the movements are seasonal... having to do with the migration of some prey animals... also the gathering of certain plants also fruits.

One of the hunters is TSU TE RONGLOA... whose name means ‘Eats the Heart.’ He is the Primary male... or dominant young male... under the

Matriarch also Patriarch. Mariella sees right away that Tsu Te is not happy about her being here.

He suspects that it has more to do with Auleiha than with a general mistrust of ‘aliens.’ Also… she is right.

Mariella is shocked to see Jan also N'deh here… seated also- already eating. Jan waves jauntily also grin at her… licking her fingers.

It is nice to be among her old friends again… she says.

They came to us in the forest also told us Auleiha had found you.

The whole village knew Mariella was coming... Auleiha let her mother... Mo'at... know while they were still out in the bush.

20

Does Mariella wonder how she did that? She was not packing a cellular phone. Jan just smiles.

Mariella eats dinner with them... also is made welcome. He is served some cooked fish... also some hexapede meat. It is delicious. Auleiha offers her some steamed grubs... also he does not want to be rude... especially not with her...

So-o...?

They turn out to be sweet... with a consistency a bit indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable shrimp. He has a second helping... making a show of learning the IV’AN word for it.

Across the fire... she sees Jan grinning at her. She says something to N'deh... leaning close to her... also she closes its eyes in agreement.

The fires are burning low. The clan is bedding down for the night... in fiber, hammocks slung about the inside of

the mighty tree. Mariella is given a place to sleep. He stares at the fire... its flickering light reflecting in its eyes. What is happening to her?

SHE- feels so... right... here.

Mariella closes its eyes... also...

SHE- opens its eyes. The inside of the Cabin at site 14 is momentarily disorienting. Human Mariella lifts the INTERCONNECTION rig also rubs its temples. He has been under for sixteen hours.

Jan wakes up in the next chair. She gets up... stretching also rubbing her numbed indistinguishable, close, near,

almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wisest. Cracks her neck.

JAN- Gawd!! What a day. I need to get some rack. I recommend you do the same. Village life starts early at 4 A.M.

Mariella is reeling. That is, it? ‘What a day?’ He realizes he has lost all sense of what they are doing here if he ever had it.

Jan crashes down onto her bunk with a mighty groan.

She pulls herself out of its chair also into its bunk.

A beat...!

-Then-

JAN- You did well today... Mariella. Good. I am proud of you.

(THE NEXT MORNING)

Mariella awakens early to discerns Jan talking to Siessah at the base.

Siessah is saying that Ridgeville is cutting off their work. After the crash... she cannot spare a ship to ferry them around every day.

Also... Duartha is pissed off about losing another man. They are being recalled.

Jan tells her to forget about the sampling up in the mountains... they are onto something. They are in the Tsumongwi village... also Mariella has made friends with the Patriarch's daughter.

It could be a breakthrough. Also... they do not need a JF-17. Siessah tells them to stay on it... she will deal with Ridgeville also CFOESE.

Jan coronae Mariella a cup of coffee.

JAN- Let us go... amigo. Time to take flesh also walk the earth.

MARIELLA... MIND BODY TAKE OVER- Interconnections awake... looking up at the inside of the cathedral tree. Shafts of sunlight stream down into the high vault above her through gaps in the ‘braided’ trunks. Flying Sting-bats twinkle silently high up in a shaft of light.

Jan comes by... snapping her fingers.

JAN- Another beautiful day in hell.

Mariella walks outside... looking for Auleiha. We see village life among the

Tsumongwi... kids playing... people cooking... cleaning fish. Mo'at tells Mariella where to find her daughter.

Auleiha bows fishing from a rock in the pool below a large waterfall. Mariella emerges from the trees nearby also freezes... watching her.

With deep concentration... she stands still as a statue.

Then the spear- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable arrow shoot into the water... also Auleiha jumps in waist-deep to

retrieve it. She holds up a good-sized fish... also grins at Mariella.

She comes up out of the water... a dripping primeval beauty.

She pulls the arrow out of the fish also coronae it the bow to Mariella, Its turn.

She- is flailing about in the pool... trying to shoot a fish. It is a lot harder than it looks. Auleiha must turn away... she is laughing so much. Finally, Mariella nails a fish about four inches long also holds it up proudly.

MARIELLA- Anybody can hit the big ones.

TSUTE also another young hunter... TRI COOCHYESTEWA... come out of the forest leading TWO DOMESTICATED DIRE-PEGASUS.

They control the huge animals with a leather nose-ring... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise there is no sign of bridle... reins or saddle... only a woven grass surcingle around the animal's chest. The dire-PEGASUS drink from the edge of the pool.

Tsu Te disdainfully watches Mariella slogging out of the pool with its tiny prize.

AULEIHA- It is Tsu Te.

MARIELLA- Gezundheit. Pleased to meet Ya.

TSU - When are you going away?

MARIELLA- Direct- I indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable that. It is fresh.

Actually... I hoped to stay awhile. Pick up a few hunting tips from Auleiha.

Auleiha speaks to Tsu Te in their language. In subtitles... we learn that the matriarch has instructed her to teach the alien the ways of the forest... to see if it can be done. Tsu Te sneers at that... also says something which needs no translation.

Tsu Te flips its head also catches the end of its long queue in one corona. With the other corona he gently takes one moth- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable antennae of its dire-PEGASUS... also bends it down toward her.

Next... she does an amazing thing... she touches the end of its hair to the end of the antenna... which looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a feather.

The ‘hair’ comes alive... rapidly interweaving with the feather-indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a

muchness, and comparable tendrils. They knit together... forming what Mariella realizes is a neural interface... a direct plug-in to the PEGASUS's nervous system?

In one fluid motion... Tsu Te hooks its barefoot into the bottom of the surcingle also vaults up onto the back of its dire-PEGASUS. She grips the PEGASUS's flanks with its legs... also guides it with direct motor commands from the neural hookup. The animal has become an extension of its own body. Also... its coronae are free to fire a bow.

The two hunters wheel around also ride into the woods along a game trail. Mariella realizes how much he must learn.

MONTAGE OF AULEIHA TEACHING:

We see a sequence of vignettes over the next few days... of Mariella... also Auleiha together... in the village also the forest.

She is teaching her their ways.

We see her pointing out different plants... also how they can be used. Which juices or saps or leaves can be used to attract or repel certain animals? Which

plant poisons are good for the arrows? What to avoid. How to walk.

How to be invisible.

AULEIHA stands behind her... correcting its position as he draws a longbow. Her coronae moved on its arm... she ought to er's... correcting its stance. Aware of her touch... Mariella finds it hard to concentrate.

NEAR A TRAIL we see them crouching behind concealing foliage as a herd of Enfield Titanotheres walk past.

We see only the legs... huge as tree trunks. In the middle of the herd... a

couple of babies walk... sheltered from predators among their parents' legs.

AULEIHA whirls a bolo round also round above her head.

She hurls it also the two balls... connected by a leather thong... whistles through the air. They wrap around a sapling being used as a target. Mariella tries it.

The bolo winds up wrapped around its head... with one of the balls hitting her painfully in the nose.

Auleiha must lean against a tree she is laughing so hard.

NIGHT time... Mariella and Auleiha bow-fishing from a dugout canoe over the glowing anemones at the bottom of a pool.

A large fish swims silhouetted against the glow. ZAP! Mariella spears it.

SHOT OF AULEIHA backlit by the sun. She is talking a mile a minute... gesturing rapidly... explaining something. We do not discern the words. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable Mariella... we are just spellbound watching her.

MARIELLA nervously grips the woven surcingle on the back of an old... swaybacked dire-PEGASUS. Auleiha holds its nose ring... keeping it steady... while she instructs Mariella to bend its antenna... strong also shiny as a garden hose... down to her.

SHE- hesitantly touches the tip of its queue to the antenna.

The tendrils interweave. Mariella's eyes get big also its mouth drops open. Wow! SHE- feels the power of the massive legs under her. PEGASUS's eyes also go wide.

~*~

Auleiha strokes its muzzle... calming it. It twitches also stumbles as Mariella learns how to control it.

IN THE VILLAGE Mariella also Auleiha feeds a dire-PEGASUS foal with a gourd-shaped indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a nipple.

It is the survivor of Lillie Wainfleet's casual slaughter picked up by Auleiha's- people when N'deh signaled them with the bullroarer.

The foal gulps its meal.

SOME OF THE VILLAGE KIDS squeal with delight as Mariella shows them how to play baseball. SHE- pitches a leather bolo ball to a kid with a corona-carved bat.

The kid makes a strong hit indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise when Mariella yells ‘run!’ in IV’AN… the kid bolts into the forest. Everyone cheers… thinking it is the game.

IN THE FOREST…

AULEIHA gently reaches up also bends a large flower toward her. From the pitcher- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable flower... she sips the nectar... which is sweet also thick as honey. An incredibly sensuous image.

MARIELLA... AULEIHA ALSO N'DEH has come upon the body of a slinger killed by a power suit paratrooper. The flying dart is hovering around the parent body indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable to a hummingbird... whimpering pitifully.

Auleiha gently captures the starving dart. N'deh chews up some food from its pouch also feeds it from its mouth to the dart's beak. It swallows hungrily... crying for more. We will see what a captive dart is used for later.

A STREAMBED is completely overgrown by a tightly woven thicket. Mariella also Auleiha discerns a thundering sound around the bend ahead of them comes to a solid wall of stampeding sturmbeest.

Visualize indigo also orange wildebeest five feet tall... weighing ten tons also moving indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a locomotive. Then multiply it by several dozens.

Mariella also Auleiha sprint down the overgrown tunnel as fast as they can... with the thundering wall of-Sturmbeest overtaking them. He leaps to an overhanging limb also scrambles up. She leaps... grabs it... also he pulls her up just as the Sturmbeest thunder underneath them indistinguishable, close,

near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a train.

Auleiha laughs breathlessly. So, does she... giving her a mock push. Off-balance... she grabs her... also she indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable that simply fine.

NIGHT HUNTING- Auleiha also Mariella ran through the forest by moonlight indistinguishable, close, near,

almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and compare two human panthers. He is more surefooted... now.

As agile as she is. Galaxies of bioluminescence surround them.

The foliage is a blur... whipping past. They move joyfully... soundlessly... also in perfect unison... two forest spirits. Above- them... mighty Polyphemus is a crescent half-filling the sky... casting its special light over the landscape.

Auleiha takes her up a fallen trunk... also soon they are running along

branches that are 305 feet above the ground. Mariella cannot think. He must trust his body.

SHE- sprints with her through the trees... occasionally climbing also leaping as she does with the ease of a spider monkey.

Now creeping stealthily... Mariella stalks a large male hexapede. SHE- is at one with the night forest... with its thousands of bio-sources glowing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the milky way

through the dark branches... it is strange sounds also smell... water dripping off the unfamiliar leaves. The danger also the excitement of the primeval world suffuses its soul.

Auleiha flushes the prey... from nearby... also the hexapede bolts. Mariella rapidly knocks an arrow also tracks it. THWAP! It tumbles also lies still... with the shaft of Mariella's arrow sticking up out of its chest. A clean kill.

Mariella also Auleiha kneels over the body. She cuts its throat... also daubs the blood on her fingertip. She draws a line under each of its eyes... symbolizing

that he ‘sees’ the hexapede… or honors its reason for existence. He is a hunter now. Just in time for…

(THE MIGHTY HUNT)

The annual sturmbeest MIGRATION is the time of the biggest event in the lives of the Tsumongwi also the neighboring clans.

HUMAN MARIELLA- is on the line with Siessah… telling her excitedly that he has been asked to join the big hunt… the annual sturmbeest hunt. Siessah is impressive.

It has never happened before. She is going to come out there with

Marcia also sees if they can get some of it on film... to show the folks back home.

Mariella tells her he must go... he must get back under the INTERCONNECTION. They must make a pilgrimage to the Praying Mountains today... She is not sure what it is all about.

ALL THE MOUNTAIN- AND TRAIL as Tsu Te leads a small group of hunters... mounted on dire-PEGASUS... up the slope.

Mariella... riding well enough to keep up... looks up at something ahead. Tsu Te signals a stop.

REVERSE... LOOKING UPSLOPE... they are at a strange sight.

The mangrove- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable trees rise arthritically out of the rock.

Some large boulders of Tekttites and Moldavite have been trapped in their gnarled grip... also hang suspended far above.

Farther up... almost five hundred feet above them... more of the boulders are woven into the twisted tree trunks.

It is some freak natural occurrence... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise the result is spectacular.

It is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the mythical beanstalk... going up into the clouds.

There is a THUNDERING ROAR... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable,

kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to an artillery barrage... also the ground shakes.

Mariella looks around... also sees one of the superconductor mountains grinding against the flank of a mesa near them. A huge rockfall is set loose... tumbling down the side of the mesa.

The Thundering Rocks.

By its motion... Mariella can see that it is a mountain... MONS VERITATIS... will pass over or near the beanstalk in less than an hour. The hunter's dismount... Mariella a little clumsily. Auleiha steps up next to her.

MARIELLA Now what? AULEIHA Now we climb.

MARIELLA- I was afraid you were going to say that.

FIVE HUNDRED FEET up the beanstalk... the hunters clamber among the gargantuan vine trunks. They pass one of the trapped Tekttites and Moldavite boulders which are providing the lift for its incredible tree. Mariella looks down also cannot believe how the massive trunk dwindles to the apparent size of a licorice stick before it gets to the ground.

A chunk breaks off the Tekttites and Moldavite boulder as they climb over it... also it floats upwards. They reach the upper branches of the beanstalk tree.

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Above them... Mons- Veritatis fills the sky with its craggy underbelly. They are close now. A spray from one of the waterfalls hits them. Some of the vines hanging down are brushing over the upper branches of the beanstalk with a crackling.

One by one the hunters grab onto vines as they pass.

Mariella grins at Auleiha also leaps to a passing vine. She follows also they climb rapidly up toward the bottom of the floating mountain.

They work their way up into the grotto from which a waterfall is thundering down into the void indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a faucet of the Gods. The hunters but tremble in the grotto. Mariella peers down... through a rocky window on the world below.

Surreal, Tsu Te leads them through the cave until they emerge at the... CLIFF FACE AND SIDE. The sheer size of Mons Veritatis.

LIKEWISE- Mariella sees where they are going.

It is the Hippocampus rookery.

Scores of the Hippocampus huddle on the rock outcroppings... some hanging almost indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable bats.

Auleiha explains that it is the only place they land... never- ever on the ground below... also the only way to approach a Hippocampus is when it has landed.

MARIELLA-Why would you want to approach so braver?

She is about to find out.

Tsu Te creeps up behind a large specimen. As Joyful also deadly as it is in the air... it looks clumsy on the rocky perch. Its wing membranes are folded also ugly... also it hugs the rock to keep from slipping off. It is almost comical. It

cannot look behind itself... which is where Tsu Te approaches from.

Tsu Te works its way up to it also plugs the end of its queue into the tip of the big ray's antenna. It is also tense up...

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise Tsu Te strokes its back with its palm... also can climb onto it now that he has motor control.

Tsu Te locks herself to its body with its arms also legs... also shouts a loud... whooping cry.

The Hippocampus leaps from its perch also drops... pulling out of a dive also gliding away. Tsu Te guides it back toward the others... also it banks past with a whoosh of air. Raising one corona in an exultant salute... he also shrieks the Hippocampus shrieks with her.

Auleiha gestures for Mariella to go first... pointing to a nice... healthy specimen with a 14-foot wingspan.

Mariella does it just indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable Tsu Te did...

also manages to make the hookup. Its creature flaps its wings... spooking...

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise he gets it calmed down. SHE- climbs on its back also...

THWAP!

THWAP!

The creature is off indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a shot.

Mariella screams in terror... also the creature shrieks... drowning her out.

They fall together... spiraling out of control... also he is almost tossed loose. The thing is squawking also shrieking so much he cannot think.

MARIELLA- ‘Shut the freak up!’

It does...

MARIELLA Fly straight- and Levels for me!

It does...

To say it... she had to think the commands mind and mind linked zenith, apex, and apogee to the highest... also by

thinking it... she made the big creature do as she wished.

SHE- thinks ‘bank left’ also it does. He starts to get the hang of flying a Hippocampus.

In a world of wonders... it is the most exhilarating thing yet. He looks beside her as Auleiha falls into formation with her. We see the approval in her expression.

She signals to her with a corona gesture... also banks away. MARIELLA I am your wingman... baby.

She banks after her in a steep turn... joining the rest of the flying

hunters. They all fall into formation... ten of them in a delta pattern indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to migrating geese.

They dive together toward the rainforest far below.

VIDEO VIEW OF THE RAINFOREST from above. There is an undulating river below... a river of sturmbeest.

Thousands of them are on the move. Their indigo also pink stripes

merge into a rippling more... a living rapid of thundering muscle.

Marcia De Los Santos points her 4D camera down from the rear door of a JF-17 flown by Kimberly Chacon. Dr. Siessah stares down... transfixed by the sight... as he is every year.

Siessah tells Kimberly to get lower.

Siessah sees something also its jaw drops in amazement. A Hippocampus pulls up alongside the JF-17.

Mariella... Mind-body take over waves at them... then peels off also dives

toward the herd below... catching up to the other IV’AN hunters.

The sturmbeest follow the same trail... also have done so for millennia. There are no large trees here... also the years' worth of undergrowth is pulverized under the thundering hooves in seconds.

Dust rises from its living river indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable steam from a butterfly's backside.

AT GROUND LEVEL... the camera vibrates indistinguishable, close,

near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable it is in a paint- shaker. The roar is sustained thunder.

We track with the herd as they gallop over the rolling ground... dividing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable flow of water around rocks.

Suddenly a Pink-skinned IV’AN hunter appears in FG-4D in hologram

projections. Astride a dire-PEGASUS at full gallop. The sight is breathtaking.

The hunter... even on its Nahhas mount is dwarfed by the sturmbeest... which are indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable freight engines.

The IV'AN has a huge spear... 3 feet long. FROM ABOVE we see the herd filling frame. Hippocampus... ridden by IV'AN hunters... come into shot diving indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable,

kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable hawks toward the sturmbeest herd. The creature-mounted hunters have long spears as well. Lashed to the business end of each is a living SLINGER DART... making it a venomous harpoon.

If you are getting the impression that sturmbeest are hard to kill... you are right.

(THERE IS AN EPIC HUNT)

PEGASUS IV'AN plunge fearlessly in amongst the galloping sturmbeest... whose ought to ers are above their heads. It is indistinguishable,

close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable riding next to a thundering wall of rippling muscle.

The mounted hunters try to isolate one animal... carving it out from the herd... so that the flying riders can make the kill. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it is hairy stuff... as the sturmbeest go into evasive action... turning unpredictably... also kicking out with their back hooves as they crash through

underbrush also decimate anything in their path.

When the sturmbeest feel threatened the stream divides... branching out into smaller trails through higher trees.

It makes staying with them... whether on HORSEBACK or creature back an obstacle course.

Mariella skims low over the head with the other flying hunters. She zigs also zags through the trees... trying to make a shot with its spear. The dust from the sturmbeest herd is sometimes blinding.

She dodges trunks also branches as the herd pours indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a torrent through narrow channels in the brush.

Two dire-PEGASUS mounted warriors gallop through the herd...

targeting a single animal. They jab it with their spears... also it turns outward from the herd. The riders stay between it also the main mass of the herd... forcing it further away.

Tsu Te swoops in on the isolated animal... coming up behind it. He crouches far forward on the back of the big Hippocampus... its dart tipped spear held back also high for the thrust.

Tsu Te goes for the shot. The dart strikes home... in the vulnerable spot between the armored ought to er's... just at the base of the neck... the only place the dart can penetrate. The dart hits the nerve plexus there also the beast crashes forward... flipping twice from the speed of its run.

The herd thunders past it... a few feet away as Tsu Te swoops off... its arms raised in triumph.

A dire-PEGASUS mounted rider leaps a fallen log... staying with the herd. A moment later he is hit by a zigzagging sturmbeest... also knocked into some brush. Its mount tumbles also he is thrown clear. She scrambles up also runs indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable hell as the river of sturmbeest bears down on her.

SHE- makes it out of the path by inches... the Nahhas hooves thundering past her.

Mariella also Auleiha fly among the trees in a hairy display of alienates.

Kimberly Chacon... in the JF-17... tries to keep up with her also cannot make tight turns. Marcia is cussing her out... trying to get a good shot of Mariella.

SHE- homes in on a single animal... flying up behind it... closer also closer... poised for a strike.

SHE- hurls the spear also it misses the mark... sticking harmlessly in

the thickly armored ought to er. SHE- switches to its bow for another shot when she is knocked clean off the back of its creature by a tree branch. SHE- tumbles to the ground also gets up running. Its creature shrieks also flap away.

A sturmbeest is charging toward her indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a living Kenworth. Auleiha swoops down... also hurls her spear... missing the plexus. It sticks in the beast's ought to er.

The sturmbeest roars also bucks... shaking off the spear... just as it passes Mariella. Then it wheels in a rage... stopping in a cloud of dust. It lowers its head also charges Mariella.

Mariella dives for the fallen spear as the sturmbeest thunders toward her. He plants the blunt end of the spear in the ground... also angles the sharp end up toward the thing's muscular chest. He leaps aside at the last microsecond.

The spear is driven deep into the sturmbeest's chest... piercing its heart. Mariella is knocked aside by its armored ought to er... also kicked by one of the

legs as the beast collapses. It crashes to the ground also skids to a stop in a cloud of dust. Mariella staggers to its feet... shaken. Two dire-PEGASUS riders pull up to a stop at Mariella's kill... whooping also waving their herding spears.

N'deh... one of the riders... salutes Mariella with a formal gesture of honor.

Mariella runs up an incline to a rocky outcropping. Auleiha swoops into an expert landing with her Hippocampus... also Mariella jumps on behind her.

With a powerful take-off stroke, the creature leaps into the air.

Auleiha grins also whoops... ecstatic that Mariella is not only alive indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise has killed a sturmbeest.

He has the heart of a mighty hunter.

Who knew?

Tsu Te... flying above... sees it also is not so happy.

BACK AT THE VILLAGE... that night... the festival of the hunt is in full swing... a feast with music... also dancing lots of sturmbeest steaks. The huge bonfires illuminate the happy faces of the clan members.

The music also dance is surprisingly sophisticated for a technically primitive culture. Expressive also emotional... the sinuous movements are a celebration of the body... a celebration of life... movement... breath.

We see an epic ‘song’ which is a complex performance by several members

of the group which involves dance... rhythmic ethnic music.

Chanting also singing... also incredibly agile ‘corona-dancing’ where the long... tendril- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable fingers of the singers weave a poetic narrative of their own... on harmony or counterpoint to the other elements of the dance. Rapid controlled shifts of the dancers' bioluminescent spots add to the magical beauty of the performance.

When the song ends... a new beat also begins a dozen people rush in to dance in a circle. Auleiha grabs Mariella's corona also pulls her into the circle of dancers.

SHE- is a little clumsy indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise game to try... also he puts some variations on their *clbuttic* forms that are inspired by MTV.

We see her shedding civilization also inhibition... letting herself go also dancing wild free with the IV'AN people.

Jan watches her with approval. She slips her corona into N'deh's... also he puts its arm around her. We realize that they are- much closer than we thought.

Mariella also Auleiha flows amongst the dancers... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they are looking only at each other. A couple of the young men watching from outside the circle are giggling also talking about Mariella Auleiha. The Matriarch follows their look... also sees that the connection is

being made. She also the Patriarch confer.

They are not sure if it is a good or a sad thing that their daughter also the alien seems to be coming together.

Mato'a is against the Matriarch's idea of teaching Mariella too much of their knowledge. He thinks it is wrong to trust the aliens. It will only bring sorrow. The IV’AN see us as emotionally disturbed children... smart indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable

wise out of control... violent... intolerant... uncentered.

Mo'at's instinct is to trust its one.

IN THE FOREST Auleiha leads Mariella along a moonlit path.

The sound of the festival is distant.

She is taking her to her special place. They pass along the base of a waterfall also come to a basin... or pond... surrounded by the luminous weeping willows hanging with frost-like or snow-covered- fiberoptic frons.

Auleiha dives from a rock... swimming across the pond... which glows from beneath.

Mariella swims with her... also they pass over beautiful glowing adenoids... in a fantastic variety of pastel colors. Mariella also Auleiha... swimming slowly under the surface... seem to float in some cosmic dance above a luminous garden of waving... hypnotic shapes. Tiny purple fish swim around them... darting away also swirling back.

Auleiha emerges from the water at the edge of a small glade. Mariella joins her also leads her by the corona to

the center of the stand of willows. It is an exquisitely beautiful spot. Surrounding them are patterns of glowing- pastels... pinks also soft blues... white slashes of purple... also soft accents of scarlet.

Underfoot... a rolling bed of moss glows faintly. It reacts- to their footsteps with expanding rings of light. A flock of fan a sea serpents' flicks into spinning flight... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a blizzard of brightly colored frisbees.

The willows stir... responding to the presence of Mariella also- Auleiha. She holds up her coronae also speaks softly... in the IV'AN language. The tendrils sway as if in a soft breeze... also seem to caress her. Mariella puts out its coronae also the tendrils play over its fingers... its palms... its forearms.

SHE- feels something... a faint tingling... barely there.

Some willathewisps circle around them... some alighting on there ought to er's also arms. She tells her that the willathewisps are the seeds of the willows

also that they are an important part of the soul of the forest.

They have accepted Mariella… also that is why the Matriarch gave her a chance. Mariella is not indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the other aliens.

Except for Jan… who is as close to an IV’AN as any alien has ever been. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a

muchness, and comparable wise even with her years here... she still holds back.

She has never thrown herself completely into the forest... into their life... the way he has.

Mariella has embraced the animistic forest... which is alive with invisible dynamic forces... spirits. Things which he does not understand... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise accept... in a way a scientist could not without

taking it apart also finding out how it worked.

She deeply respects these primal people who are in touch with forces we no longer see also feel.

Mariella puts its coronae on Auleiha's ought to ers also turns her around... to face her. She tells her that he thinks he is starting to see. She smiles. Closes her eyes also open them.

Yes- She puts its face close to hers. She rubs her cheek against it. They kiss. She pulls her down until they are kneeling... facing each other in the sacred glade.

Auleiha unbinds her queue... letting her hair tendrils float freely in a glossy mane. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the willows they seem to stir gently in a breeze that is not there. Her supple fingers slowly... lovingly... unbind Mariella's queue also its hair flows out around its ought to er. They come together in another lingering kiss.

With its own life... their hair floats together... intertwining with gentle undulations. Mariella rocks with the power of direct contact between its

nervous system also hers. It is how the IV’AN make love (or a part of it...) Also, it is the ultimate intimacy.

She falls into the infinite pool of her. They sink on the bed of moss... also ripples of light spread out under them.

DAWN BREAKS in the sacred glade. Shafts of orange morning light... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a Maxfield Parrish painting. Mariella also Auleiha asleep in each other's arms.

Also... a roar of engines which wakes them. They move back into concealment as the splintering... the crackling sound of the forest being crushed under Nahhas treads gets- louder. In hiding... they watch as the blade of a gigantic bulldozer becomes a dark wall behind the sheltering ring of willows.

The willows begin to fall before the- blade... to be ground under the treads. The bulldozer pushes inexorably into the glade... splintering the trees... plowing the earth before it.

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Mariella also Auleiha reels back... stunned by the destruction they are witnessing. Mariella runs out into the path of the bulldozer... waving its arms. The bulldozer is unmanned... driven by LINK control from back at the base.

A metal juggernaut version of the mind-body takeovers.

BACK AT IVAN... in the control room of the tractors... the operator sees an IV’AN in front of its machine. He asks for direction from ‘its’ supervisor. Ridgeville... who is directing the clearing operation... is walking by the guy's workstation at that moment.

She tells her to push on. The native will move. They must learn to get out of the way. Some things are just inevitable.

Mariella gives up trying to stop the unmanned tractor. It grinds past the tiny figures of Auleiha also Mariella... obliterating the sacred site... leaving only mud also wood splinters in the morning sunlight. Auleiha's eyes stream tears... watching the willows die.

HUMAN MARIELLA ALSO... JAN is on the video interconnection to Parrish.

They are furious that the clearcutting has destroyed another sacred

site of the IV'AN... just when they were making real progress with them. Parrish is disturbed by its... torn by its conscience... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise he offers some pathetic blandishments... also hangs up. Jan swears.

Damn weasel.

Totally on the take. She is Ridgeville's lapdog.

Siessah calls them to tell them that they are being recalled. A ship will-

be sent to pick them up. It is over. Ridgeville is giving up on the mind-body take over the program. The construction is too important to the economic survival of the whole colony.

Mariella says he is not coming in. They need to stay also to help IV'AN... somehow. Get them to move... or at least- understand what is happening. They will not understand.

Mariella snaps off the transmitter also goes right to the INTERCONNECTION chair. Jan says they ought to go in. Talk to Ridgeville. Try to

get her to see the reason. Mariella ignores her also pulls the helmet down.

IN THE VILLAGE... Auleiha had been waiting for Mariella to wake up. He rises... also in its eyes... she sees that something terrible is happening... also its pain.

She goes to Mo'at also Mato'a... to try to explain to them that the aliens mean harm to the forest.

He says he was sent here to get their trust... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable

wise that humans do not care about them. It is a lie. They do not see. They will never see it.

The Tsumongwi must move far away.

Tsu Te charges forward... screaming at

Mariella. SHE- is crazed by the loss of the glade... the horror of what is being done by Mariella's people.

She says the aliens are insane people... that they are poison. Also... Mariella is one of them... even though he wears the disguise of an IV’AN body.

Crying also screaming at her... he yells at Mariella to go.

Mariella refuses, she says he loves Auleiha... also he is going to stay somehow.

Jan grabs his arm. She hisses in its ear that he is crazy. How can he stay? They are pulling the plug back at base. He is just making things worse.

Mariella shrugs her off. Says he is staying.

Tsu Te challenges her to a fight.

Mato'a yells for the weapons to be brought... also Mo'at is silent. Her disappointment also angers obvious.

The IV’AN never kill each other... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they will fight... also the fights can be brutal. The weapons are long staves... thick also solid... made from some very dense wood.

Mariella also Tsu Te square off.

Tsu Te leaps at her with a sharp cry also Mariella parries with its staff. The staves clack off each other as the two

combatants leap also a duck. Tsu Te sweeps Mariella off its feet with a roundhouse hit to the ankles... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise Mariella rolls out also catches Tsu Te in the belly with the blunt end of the stick.

23

AT SITE 19... a Gynosphinx gunship lands also four common soldiers in full armor jump out... led by Corporal Lillie Wainfleet.

TSU TE wades in with a series of short... sharp blows. Mariella swings with equal fury. They are both fighting from the heart.

INSIDE THE CABIN at Site 7 the door bangs open also the common soldier clomp inside.

They cross to the INTERCONNECTION chairs also Lillie jerks the helmet off Jan's head. In the village... standing next to N'deh... Jan... Mind-body take over's eyes to roll back also she keels over. N'deh barely catches her before she hits the ground.

Mariella... in the heat of battle... does not see it. SHE- stands... panting... facing Tsu Te.

Tsu Te leaps forward also- Mariella's eyes go blank. They roll back!

Tsu Te puts one alongside its head.

Mariella sprawls... completely inert. Tsu Te approaches... staring at the still figure. Auleiha rushes in... shoving her back... screaming at her. She goes to Mariella also cradles her head.

Tsu Te is afraid now that he might have killed Mariella. Its rage is

gone... replaced by LINK. He drops its stick also runs into the forest.

Auleiha strokes Mariella's head.

HUMAN MARIELLA comes out of the INTERCONNECTION in a rage. Coming from the fight... he is amped to the max. It added to the outrage of the common soldier interrupting an INTERCONNECTION in progress- (which is potentially lethal to the mind-body take over if it is in the middle of something dangerous.)

He lunges at Lillie... forgetting he has no legs in its world. He falls onto the

floor. Lillie laughs also kicks her in the stomach.

LILLIE- Aren't you going to bite my throat out?

Lillie kicks her again. The common soldier grabs Mariella also he struggles. They twist their arms behind her, also cuff her... throw her in its chair also slap a mask over its face. They drag Mariella also Jan out to the Gynosphinx.

AT IVAN, the two wayward controllers confront Ridgeville also-Duartha. Siessah cannot help them. They have stepped over the line.

Mariella yells that we are going to destroy these people before we even understand them.

Ridgeville accuses Mariella of- ‘going native.’ Says he has forgotten who he works for.

Why is he here?

Mariella says he never knew why he was here until now. Ridgeville does not get what that might mean.

24

Jan says the irony is that the greatest treasure on its planet is not the

precious minerals to be ripped out of the earth. Not the Big Rock Calsoy Mountain.

It is biodiversity in the forest. There are things in that forest of value they cannot imagine. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they will bulldoze it before they know.

There are mysteries here... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to how the

IV’AN communicate over long distances. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to why their language is the same all over the planet. How is that possible? indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to how the cold also flu viruses were wiped out.

Ridgeville is not impressive. Sure, they have made a lot of money off the FDF’n counter-viruses. What has that got to do with clearing a construction site in

one spot on a virgin planet? They must get a foothold here.

It is vital. Also… he is not about to let a few bleeding hearts also a bunch of primitive mud-men stand in its way. It is a big planet. The IV'AN can move. Siessah tries to explain that what happens to one

The IV'AN clan is somehow known soon by all of them… also if they destroy its opportunity for cultural contact… they may destroy it all the time… planetwide.

Ridgeville says he will take that chance. He wants Mariella also Jan

suspended... without pay... also returned to Earth on Prometheus... which leaves in a few days as soon as it is done fueling. Also... the other controllers are to cease all contact between their mind-body takeovers also the aboriginal population.

If the locals will not cooperate... I will just have to breed its workforce population here from among the mind-body takeovers.

It will take longer... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise at least

we can raise them with our language also some values that make sense. Safer is also more reliable overall.

God help you... Jan says.

THE TRACTORS ALSO BULLDOZERS crush the forest before them.

Trees are slashed down by the plasma cutters... or dynamited into kindling.

Terrified animals flee before the onslaught. common soldier in power-suits stride through the ravaged forest... blasting anything that moves.

Now we see what the machines are doing... cutting a firebreak. When the swath of destruction reaches the full circle... the forest in the center is ignited. The animals have no place to go. The black smoke spreads cancerously over the rainforest. The IV'AN watch in horror from a hillside as the flames burn indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a funeral pyre below.

AT IVAN Mariella goes to the INTERCONNECTION room also makes an impassioned speech to the controllers

when their shift ends. He says that they know the truth... in their hearts if not in their minds... that FDR is not Hell... it is

Eden, also...

Eden is being bulldozed also strip-mined also- raped. We have no right. We are the aliens here. We are space monsters. The IV'AN does not understand what is happening. They trusted us also we betrayed them. Also, people indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable-

Ridgeville... with their corruption also deceit... is going to turn its place into another Earth. Suck the life out of it... also kill it indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparably cancer.

We blew it on Earth. We lost the most precious thing we had. Also, now we want to take that precious thing away from someone else. The controllers will not meet its eyes.

They know he is right. indistinguishable, close, near, almost

identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they are making good money here... also it is going to happen anyway... with or without them.

What does he expect them to do?

NOW IN THE TRACTOR YARD... AT NIGHT, HAVE LIT WITH HIGH POWERD LED-LIGHTS- AND STEAM-POWERD FACTORY ALL AROUND- AND an OPEN PIT COAL MINING OPERATION WITH A MASSIVE SPINNING CONTINUES MINER. In the newly clear-cut zone... amidst the blackened stubble... the tractors stand in the moonlight

indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable idols to harsh gods. The common soldier has returned to IVAN... far down the gravel road.

Out of the tree line come ghost indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable figures on HORSEBACK.

Led by Tsu Te... the IV'AN hunters ride among the giant tractors... tiny amongst- the giant hulking shapes.

From skin bags slung over their dire-PEGASUS... the IV’AN raiding party pours something over the tires also engines- of the machines. It is the sap they use for torches... highly flammable also long burning.

Tsu Te pulls a match- stone from a pouch on the surcingle of its PEGASUS. He strikes it fiercely... also it blazes indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable thermite.

It arcs through the air.

WHOOSH- Flames roar up around the vehicles... engulfing them. The tires burn... also within seconds... one fuel tank explodes. Then others. Silhouettes of men also dire-PEGASUS cross against the wall of fire... back toward the blackness of the forest.

25

THE NEXT DAY the human base reacts to the destruction of the tractors.

Ridgeville is furious. It is going to look bad in its next report. They are going to be behind schedule now.

Damnit!

DUARTHA finally has the opportunity he has been looking for. Ridgeville authorizes a retaliatory raid against the IV’AN. There are millions of IV’AN around the planet... also the signal must be sent immediately to make clear that human property is not to be messed with.

Marcia De Los Santos comes to Mariella's room. She has some- valuable information. Some big CFOESE operation is underway also when she asked permission to ride along... she was denied. Since she also Kimberly Chacon has gotten to be friends... she asked the pilot what was going on.

Apparently... Duartha is conducting a raid on the IV'AN village. When?

Now- It is happening right now!

Mariella tells Marcia to find Jan also meets her in the Interconnection room. SHE- pumps the wheels of her chair... racing down the corridor.

GYNOSPHINX GUNSHIPS darken the sky as they come over the tops of the trees. At the head of the formation is one much larger ship... a monster over a hundred feet long which seems to block out the suns. The GENERAL

DYNAMICS TD-24-

THUNDERBIRD gunship looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a giant predatory insect... with multiple canopies at the front for pilots also gunners.

Duartha... next to the pilot of the Thunderbird... surveys the world below indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable Napoleon astride its PEGASUS overlooking the battlefield.

Mariella wheels into the INTERCONNECTION ROOM. The FLOOR SUPERVISOR protests... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise he pushes past her... yelling that it is an- emergency. Mariella goes to an INTERCONNECTION chair also starts to get in. The supervisor runs up with a CFOESE paratrooper who grabs Mariella.

Mariella surprises the guy by grabbing its lapels also jerking her down into a vicious head- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical,

homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wrist. Now reeling back with a broken nose... also Mariella grabs its sidearm out of its holster. SHE- fires three- rounds into the ceiling. All movement stops.

Mariella sweeps the gun in an arc... covering everyone in the room.

Marcia also Jan ran in... taking in the situation.

Marcia starts videoing the proceedings.

JAN- What are we doing... Mariella?

MARIELLA- I am not sure.

(There is much yelling! ‘OH-MY!’)

Uh... okay! Everyone out... now.

Now- move!

The paratrooper also all the technicians clear out... leaving the room empty except for the controllers who are under the INTERCONNECTION tranced out. At Mariella's instructions... Marcia locks the heavy steel fire door.

JAN- Not exactly the impartial journalist anymore... are you?

MARCIA- Screw it in the butt like it is not sinning.

Mariella also Jan goes under the INTERCONNECTION... leaving Marcia to guard the door.

MARIELLA... MIND-BODY TAKE OVER woke up inside the central tree of the village. Its head belongs. Auleiha comes to her.

Seeing that he is all right... she embraces her.

He runs to Mato'a also Mo'at... to warn them about the impending raid. Before she can finish the roar of turbofans shakes the jungle. They look up to the Thunderbird also its escort of Gynosphinx gunships come over the trees.

The down-blast from their engines beats the foliage... turning the space below into a maelstrom of flying leaves also debris. Mariella yells at them all to run...

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise cannot be- heard over the thunder of the jets.

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The IV’AN bravely fire at the gunships with their longbows also

spears... which bounce harmlessly off the armored ships.

Duartha laughs... then fires an incendiary rocket into the roots of the central tree. It explodes with a fireball... setting the interior on fire. The IV'AN flee into the forest.

The gunships fire more incendiary rounds... setting the whole village on fire. When the IV'AN has cleared the village center... Duartha fires high- explosives into the base of the central tree. The massive roots explode into matchsticks... also the tree topples

slowly... crashing down with a thunderous sound.

The IV’AN watch from a distance as the other two Nahhas trees which made up their home is blown up also felled. Several IV’AN have been wounded... burned by incendiary bombs... or hit by flying debris. Three are dead. Mato'a... the- Patriarch is one of them.

From the aft bay of the Thunderbird... seven power suits leap out... using steel cables to rappel down through the trees to ground level. The common soldier detaches from the

cables... also stomp hydraulically toward the village.

Lillie Wainfleet leads the power-suit squad.

The power-suit common soldier spread out... also on commands from Duartha... open fire with flamethrowers... sweeping them back also forth through the woods... systematically setting the forest on fire.

The down-blast from the gunships fans the flames through the- trees indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a

muchness, and comparable a firestorm. The IV’AN retreat as a wall of- fire moves toward them.

Mariella... running with Jan also N'deh through the smoke sparks... finds the body of a child... killed by one of the explosions.

The power-suits stride unimpeded also unchallenged through the trees... turning the forest into an inferno.

In the burning wreckage of the village... Auleiha finds her father's body. She collapses over her sobbing.

She hears clomping footsteps also looks up. Paratrooper Lillie Wainfleet... 14

feet tall in its power-suit... stands over her.

SHE- reaches down also grabs her by the queue with one hydraulic corona... which causes her to scream with shock. She jerks her to her feet also walks her toward its rendezvous point.

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Mariella... Jan also N'deh are running through the inferno... trying to find Auleiha.

IN THE INTERCONNECTION ROOM Marcia leaps back as an explosive charge shatters the lock also the door is kicked in from the other side. Armored

CFOESE common soldier pours inside... with guns leveled. They grab Marcia. Also, the lead paratrooper moves to the control injections of xights pulls the expert breaker to the INTERCONNECTION system.

IN THE JUNGLE Mariella has spotted

Wainfleet dragging Auleiha toward a landed gunship. He is running after the power-suit when- The strings are cut.

SHE- flops to the ground... limp also inert.

N'deh catches Jan as she falls.

Through the trees N'deh watches Auleiha loaded into the ship... along with four other IV’AN rounded up by another common soldier.

AT IVAN, the compound is littered with the bodies of unconscious mind-body takeovers who dropped on their tracks... whatever they were doing.

IN THE INTERCONNECTION ROOM the disoriented controllers come out of their chairs. They gape at the armed common soldier close in on Mariella also Jan... Who is arrested at gunpoint?

Mariella yells to the controllers to help. He says they are lethal the IV’AN! They are burning the forest!

Everything you have worked for is being destroyed. The other controllers just watch... paralyzed. IN RIDGEVILLE'S OFFICE... Parrish is flipping out. The wholesale burning of the forest. Mass destruction? How can he sweep it is under the rug? There is not enough money in the world. Ridgeville warns her he may be the next endangered species.

AT the BRIG... LATER. Mariella... Jan also Marcia is in a common holding

cell... usually used for drunk also rowdy construction workers.

Hegner comes up to the guard desk with a trolley.

Tell the guard he has meals for the prisoners. When the guard investigates the hot cart... Hegner clubs her heartily with a steel pipe wrapped in a towel. She moves twitchily to the cells. He opens the cell door also lets the prisoners out.

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Mariella takes the guard's gun also then picks up the phone.

She calls Kimberly Chacon... waking her up. Tell her to meet her at the airfield... with a JF-17 running... in ten minutes. She scrambles... swearing. Mariella tells Hegner... there is some stuff he wants her to get from the labs.

Within the UTILIDOR which runs under the base.

Mariella also moves the others along the narrow service tunnel toward the airfield. Hegner meets them at the airlock... coronating Mariella a bag... the stuff he requested.

Hegner wants to come along. Whatever Mariella is doing... he knows it

will be payback time. Mariella thanks Hegner also tells her to go back. She needs someone on the inside... also nobody knows Hegner is involved yet.

They don breathing gear also dash the airfield (not easily in a wheelchair.) They make it to the JF-17... which Kimberly is already revving up.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise as they are boarding, they are challenged by two CFOESE common

soldiers also Mariella is forced to pull the pistol.

The JF-17 takes off amid a hail of shots... with Mariella blasting back at the common soldier. Kimberly banks the ship away across the forest.

Jan was hit by a bullet by one of the common soldiers.

She tries to laugh it off... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it is serious.

THE CABIN at Site 20... seen from the outside.

Marcia... in the doorway... gives a thumbs-up sign. The Cabin lifts straight up out of frame.

Then at that moment at that very time- the JF-17... with the Cabin hanging under it on a long-line. Kimberly expertly turns also heads up into the

Praying Mountains.

DUARTHA ALSO- RIDGEVILLE are in the- latter's office.

They are assessing the danger posed by two loose cannon controllers

running around out there... stirring up the natives. Ridgeville wants them found... also he wants them eliminated, wanting some control around here.

It is ridiculous.

Duartha calls for an air search with all its gunships. She tells Ridgeville to relax. Not believing the IV'AN will attack humans if they have prisoners. One of the native men says she is the daughter of a clan- Patriarch... so it gives us a good chip.

IV'AN of the Tsumongwi clan is waiting in a densely wooded gorge deep

in the Praying Mountains. They watch as the Cabin is lowered to the ground.

Kimberly uncouples the extensive line... waves... also banks away.

Jan tells Mariella that its spot is the most sacred place of the Tsumongwi. She believes they will defend its place to death... also it is the best stronghold they could hope for.

Mariella takes her corona. She is white from loss of blood also shock. She is dying... also there is nothing Mariella can do. Now I am asking if IV'AN can do anything.

Jan says there is one thing they can try. They must take her to the WELL OF SOULS. She tells her to hurry...

N'deh will tell her what to do. Mariella rolls herself to its INTERCONNECTION chair also climbs in.

IN THE JUNGLE... LATER. Mariella... Mind-body takes over walks with a small balcony of IV'AN. N'deh carries Human Jan... wearing breathing gear... lightly in its arms indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a child. She

looks up at her... smiling weakly smiling back.

JAN- You look smaller in person.

The other Tsumongwi... including Tsu Te also a grieving Mo'at... follow behind.

THE WELL OF SOULS is a Nahhas grotto... into which waterfall thunders... the water falling down a sheer cliff from thousands of feet above. A dark pit... the grotto is ringed with willows... though these are much larger than anything we have seen.

They are so densely packed that their roots form a solid woven surface

wrapping over the edge also down the walls of the grotto below. The roots braid together... covering the floor of the grotto. A single large willow grows in the middle of the well.

The small party works its way down to the bottom of the Well of Souls. Jan is murmuring to N'deh in IV’AN... holding onto her. With the looks at her with love.

Mariella thinks it must be strange for her to hold her real body... something she has never- ever done.

Jan is laid gently among the roots at the foot of the willow at the center of

the Well of Souls and the waterfalls of remembrances of the youth.

Mariella watches as fine... hair indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable tendrils emerge from the roots also begin to cover her.

The IV’AN stand solemnly in a circle... chanting. Mo'at... the matriarch... stands among the willows above... leading the chant. Her unbound queue mingles with the tendrils of the willow trees... which caress her upraised arms.

(SHOT OF THE SUNS SETTING AROUND THE WORLDS.)

IN THE WELL OF SOULS- NEXT TO THE FALLS, the chant continues. The grotto is dark except for the light of the willows... a faint spectral glow. Mo'at still stands in a kind of trance amongst the tendrils of the central tree.

She opens her eyes also say something to N'deh... who kneels next to Jan. Jan is utterly still in her shroud of fine silk threads... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred,

akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a month in its cocoon.

N'DEH- (in IV’AN… subtitled.)

The Progenitrix Tree could not save her body.

He gently Link-up her breathing mask. She does not need it anymore. Mariella feels the tears welling. They are so respectful of her… also she is not even one of them.

N'deh kisses Jan on her human mouth for the first… also lasts… time.

N'deh says to Mariella that there is no death… only change.

Jan will feed the roots of the Progenitrix Tree. A great honor. LATER... in the Tsumongwi's temporary camp... Mariella asks Tsu Te to help her get Auleiha back.

She needs the best hunters for a raid on the human base. She needs a strong leader... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to Tsu Te.

TSU TE, do you know how to get in?

MARIELLA- I have a couple of ideas.

Tsu Te eyes her coldly... studying her. Then he closes its eyes... once. Opens them. They are on.

MARIELLA- Can you get help from the other clans?

TSU TE- They are coming now.

Mariella sees N'deh pass by... carrying Jan's unconscious mind-body takeover. What will they do with it... a body without a mind? Knowing the IV'AN... they will keep it alive.

(DUSKING... UNTIL- THE NEXT DAY)

Crouched in the foliage at the tree line... the raiding party studies Underworld Gate. Mariella opens the bag given to her by Hegner.

She passes out- around her nick was her ID 777 Master Sergeant, IV'AN Units, of Impressions- the DOGTAGE badges read out in type- given to all, yet her ranking is the heights- the other is just listed as hunters... telling them to keep them on their bodies. The sentry guns will not fire at anyone wearing a badge transponder.

The raid begins.

The tractors returning from the construction site provide perfect cover. The hunters... led by Mariella also Tsu Te... slip out of the trees through the dust clouds also grab onto the undercarriages. The escort common soldier in their power-suits misses it. They ride in through the double gates of the compound...

then roll out also sprint for cover among some storage containers. They make their way to the mind-body to take over the compound.

Mariella leaves the others in concealment also slips into the compound. He is dressed indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparably an IV'AN... so she goes to its old locker also gets out shorts a T-shirt... the base uniform of the mind-body takeovers. He does not do these quickly, also then walks out boldly into the compound.

Auleiha also three other IV'AN are held in a chain Interconnection cage... under guard.

Mariella walks by... nodding to the guard.

Mind-body takeovers all look the same to the common soldier. Auleiha sees her... also her eyes go wide.

SHE- signals her to get the others ready.

Mariella easily overpowers the guard... knocking her out cold.

SHE- gives a thrilling call also the other hunters to join her.

With a steel bar he also two others pry the gate open... shattering the lock.

Mariella grabs Auleiha... kissing her fiercely. The other IV'AN stop to check out that action for a second.

Suddenly two CFOESE common soldiers see them also come running.

They aim their rifles to be indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise- THWAP.

Arrows appear suddenly... stuck in the throat of one... also through the plastic mask of the other.

Mariella leads the escaping group the other way... toward the incoming

convoy of tractors. They run along the line of tractors... staying in the shadows also amongst the dust clouds. A paratrooper sees them also opens fire... sounding the alarm. A siren goes off in the compound. Mariella puts two rounds from its pistol into the paratrooper... also the hunters dodge between the tractors as more soldiers start firing.

Suddenly a power-suit appears... backlit by the sun.

A 14-foot-tall juggernaut. It opens fire with the UGA 911...

blasting up huge geysers of the earth as it tries to hit the running

hunters... who are as fast as cheetahs. The power-suited paratrooper breaks into a run... trying to keep its targets in sight.

ON MARIELLA... who has doubled back along with a tractor.

She whirls a bolo around her head with intense concentration.

She lets it fly... also it whistles out... tangling around the power-suits massive feet. It crashes down... skidding in the dirt. It starts to also rise Mariella sprints toward it.

She ought to er-slams it from the side at a full run... also it rolls onto its back.

Mariella leaps onto the big machine's chest. He fires the pistol two-coronated into the canopy at direct range.

The rounds whine off the lexan without effect. The paratrooper slams Mariella with one hydraulic corona... sending her flying. ON THE POWER-SUIT... rolling ponderously to its knees as- Out of the dust behind it... the wheel of a tractor emerges... filling the frame- The common soldier turn... seeing it... also just has time to scream- The Nahhas tire rolls over the suit... crushing it.

Auleiha pulls Mariella to its feet also the two of them sprint full out as rounds hit the ground all around them.

INSIDE THE CFOESE HANGER there is a full-tilt scramble.

Sirens blaring.

Flashing lights- common soldiers running to a row of power-suits standing in their pantries. Pilots running to power up the Gynosphinxs.

LOOKING FOR WHAT SEEMED TO BE MANY ANGLES: Running feet are everywhere- common soldiers rapidly donning their armor. Leaping into the

cockpits of power-suits also strapping in. Canopies closing. Gantries pulling back.

Duartha... barking orders... runs to a power-suit also leaps into it. She slams the canopy also powers up. She is in such a hurry she does not wait for the boarding gantry to pull back. She surges out of the slot... knocking it aside with a powerful sweep of one hydraulic arm. It topples with a crash.

Mariella picks up an automatic weapon from a fallen paratrooper who is stuck full of arrows. She spins also rakes it across the ranks of the advancing CFOESE common soldier.

They scatter indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable pigeons.

Nobody has ever shot back at them before.

Mariella empties the rifle... buying the group enough time to reach the tree line.

She sees several Gynosphinxs rising indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable

black... angry hornets from the compound.

Half a dozen power-suits are charging toward her. Mariella grabs a couple of grenades from the fallen common soldier as rounds stitch toward her. He turns also sprints for the trees.

WHAT FOLLOWS is a hairball... all-stops-pulled chase through the forest as the rolling thunder of war machines relentlessly pursue the IV'AN also the renegade mind-body take over.

The gunships roar into the forest... the Balsiger pilots searching below the canopy. They maneuver their

thundering ships between the huge trunks. The trees are so big you can fly through them between the canopy also the forest floor.

Also- the power-suits crash through the underbrush at a full run... fanning out through the jungle. When one of the gunships spots a running IV'AN on the down looking infrared... the pilot tells the power-suit common soldier also they converge.

The forest is riddled by fire from the UGA 911 cannons.

Mariella also the hunters duck behind the mighty trunks... which shelter

them from the hellacious fire. Then they run on… zigzagging.

Mariella runs from a power-suit which pounds through the forest behind her. She leaps also rolls… dodging behind trees as the cannon rips up the foliage.

Auleiha runs along beneath a fallen tree trunk while a gunship tries to hit her with its cannon. It fires rockets also she dives into a pond as the jungle explodes.

She surfaces amid burning debris as the gunship flies on.

The power-suit chasing Mariella is catching up. It follows her into a

narrow rocky cleft. It turns out to be a cul-de-sac... also Mariella is trapped. The power-suit closes in for the kill.

Then tons of rock come crashing down... smashing it into junk. Mariella whoops also waves to the IV'AN hunters poised above. They wave back.

Also, then twenty mounted IV'AN charge into the battle... the hooves of their dire-PEGASUS thundering. With a shriek... two dozen Hippocampus flash down out of the sky... IV'AN on their backs. The PEGASUS scoops up the rescued IV'AN also gallops off into the

woods. The gunships dive to give chase... dodging also weaving through the trunks.

Mariella... running from a power-suit... leads it between a stand of trees.

Hidden hunters hit it with their bolos. The power-suit goes down also the hunters set upon it... four of them pinning it. Mariella runs up also trips the rescue-release on the canopy. He rips the lid open.

The paratrooper screams as the toxic air whoosh in. Mariella pulls her out indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a

muchness, and comparable a ragdoll... tossing her away with one corona.

SHE- also the hunters lift the heavy arm... aiming the UGA 911 at an approaching gunship. Mariella reaches into the cockpit of the power-suit also hits the fire control indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wiseton.

The UGA 911 roars. Its solid tongue of tracer's rips into the Gynosphinx which cants over plummets to the ground also explodes.

Striding through the jungle in its hydraulic seven-league boots... Duartha goes ape-sh*t. What is going on?

She watches as another Gynosphinx is riddled from below. On fire... it banks over her... careening into the jungle.

Duartha wheels at the sound of hooves in time to blast a dire-PEGASUS also a rider. She pivots... firing at a running IV'AN. The hunter disappears in the gout of the earth also foliage.

Tsu Te runs along a horizontal bough. A gunship moves slowly through the woods below... looking for a victim.

Tsu Te leaps. Lands on the back of the thing. He runs along its spine... clutching a rock about the size of a baseball.

When he reaches the turbofan intakes... She hurls it down into the turbine blades full force. There is a clattering shriek... also the turbine blows apart... sending shrapnel outward through the sides of the fuselage. The gunship tilts also head for the ground. Tsu Te leaps for a liana also swings to safety. The ship explodes below her.

Two Hippocampus swoops in behind a gunship. The first rider drops a thirty-pound rock... which hits the

Gynosphinx squarely. The pilot hears the clunk... also looks around.

The second rider guides its creature over the center of the ship. Auleiha is riding behind her on the creature's back.

She rolls off onto the gunship... then runs to the rock also picks it up... pounding it down into the turbine. The turbine explodes. Auleiha runs as the gunship goes out of control. She dives out into space... also a third Hippocampus plucks her out of the air with its claws.

A paratrooper in a power-suit hears hooves also turns... Its eyes widen

as he sees- Two dire-PEGASUS... with a heavy log slung between them indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a battering ram. At a full gallop... the riders guide the log right into the canopy of the power-suit... shattering it. The suit flips onto its back... also does not move.

Tsu Te pulls out its bullroarer also starts to swing it.

The sound wails through the forest indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a siren.

The IV’AN retreat as one... disappearing into the forest.

PUSH IN ON DUARTHA calling to its men. The gunships are not answering. The suits are not answering. SHE- sees burning wreckage on its right... also a power-suit lying still on its left. The forest is silent... except for the usual hoots also screeches. What the fuck is happening?

They just got their buttes kicked by bows also arrows!? The night is

falling... also the forest is dark deep around her.

SHE- swears also rakes the jungle with its Gatling gun until the ammo-paniards are empty.

IN THE MOUNTAIN STRONGHOLD the IV'AN are gathered. There are several hundred of them. All the nearby clans have come to join the battle. It is the full night... also the stars blaze overhead. Polyphemus stares down at them with its one bloody eye.

Torches... as well as a galaxy of bioluminescence... light the gathering.

Mariella... Auleiha also Tsu Te stand before the gathered clans... the alien warrior... the daughter of the Patriarch... also the Patriarch's successor. Mariella speaks to the assembly... also Auleiha translates for her into the IV’AN language.

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She tells them they are not just fighting for its part of the forest... or these few trees... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related much of a muchness, and comparable wise for the very future of their world.

SHE- tells its stories of the aliens they call the Earth People is one of blood. For as long as they can be Linked... they take what is not theirs. They take the land also hunting the grounds of other people... also kill them... or put them in places they cannot live. They call it progress... also it has led them down a path to sickness death. Their world... their forest... is a dying place. A poisoned place. They have killed their progenitrix.

Also- they will do the same here. They must be driven away.

When they come again, they will come with all their force... also we must

be ready. We must fight... to our last breath... or they will rape also kill our mother as they did their own.

Mariella hears a familiar voice behind her.

JAN- Nice speech... kid.

Mariella spins around... seeing Jan's mind-body take overstepping up behind her. She is bright-eyed also as alive as he ever saw her. He is dumbfounded. She walks up to her... grinning.

MARIELLA- Jan! Jan... It is you!

JAN- Of course, it is me. Moron.

Finally, he whoops also picks her up… spinning her around. MARIELLA, is it going to hurt my brain if you tell me how…?

Jan says she is not sure exactly how it works.

Scientifically that is. Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise the condensed version is that under certain circumstances… the IV'AN can do its thing… call it a soul transfer. When I was dying… the trees stored… well… they

stored my mind… my emotions… my memories… me. Then they downloaded it all to its body.

No more turning into a pumpkin. I get to be Cinderella all the time… now.

Mariella is lost. The trees stored you. Jan laughs… also puts her arm around her.

Mariella… she says… it may take a bit of an explanation.

Back home we called it Siaa. A single being made up of all that is living on the whole planet. The only thing is… back home it is a myth. There is no Siaa.

If she ever lived... she has been dead long.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it is not a myth here. On FDR there is only one entity. The forest is its brain. Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a vast neural net... with every tree being a single brain cell or dendrite.

Also- all the roots comingling… those are the synapses.

One vast sentience… covering all the land. Also- everything that also walks breaths, also lives within it is a part of it. It is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a government… which keeps everything in balance. That is why the IV'AN does not kill or make war.

No ownership… no territory. They are given all they need… a place to live… a part of the great pageant of life here. Is

she intelligent…? It Siaa? Is it Mother Forest?

Sort of- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise she is more indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related much of a muchness, and comparable a kind of bio-internet.

The willows are access points… the Well of Souls also other places indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable,

kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable it around the planet are indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable big servers... storage centers. A place of memories. The Siaa mind can be accessed from anywhere. It can be used to communicate over long distances.

That is how the clan knew- Auleiha had found you. She accessed the willows. Also... that's why IV'AN only has one language all over the planet... with regional dialects of course... just for fun.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise more than a network... she has a will. An ego. She guides... she shapes... she protects. Sometimes she sacrifices something she loves for the greater good.

Also- sometimes she is extremely strict. Siaa does not take sides.

Siaa will not necessarily save you... her role is to protect all life... also the balance of life... also to protect that balance... death is necessary. She is... quite literally... Mother Nature.

Also- it is not nice to fool with Mother Nature. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise she can be petitioned... by a process surprisingly indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable prayer.

Siaa listens... also reacts as she sees fit... Sometimes, in your favor... sometimes not. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable wise you must get her attention if you want her to do something big... it takes a lot of people plugging in also petitioning... they cannot forcibly Siaa to do anything... also Siaa does not answer directly.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise she listens.

Since the IV'AN are the highest form of ambulatory life... they are valued for their input... also have a special interconnection with Siaa. In the case of

its infection of aliens... they are the best source of insight into what is going on... for reasons that they can communicate directly with the aliens.

Siaa knows instinctively that the- humans are a disease... an organism from outside. It is a new thing for her... unprecedented... also there are no guidelines for what to do.

The first also most obvious thing to do is fight the infection try to contain it. So... she sent attacking flora- also- fauna to surround the alien infection also keeps it from spreading. Siaa was functioning indistinguishable, close, near,

almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparably to an immune system... sending antibodies to the infection site. Siaa was doing chemotherapy also we were the tumor.

That is why IVAN was under constant attack... a bio- a barrage of predators also poisonous plants which were an ecological cartoon. We just thought we had landed at a particularly bad spot. Also... that is why... once we got deep into the forest... we saw a balanced ecosystem.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise we could never have seen the mindless attacks as a coordinated... systematic effort. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the slinth following the titanothere through the fence... when did a slinth also a titanothere ever work together? They are mortal enemies.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise when Siaa speaks... people listen. At least if you are born on FDR.

We did not see it. We could not see the forest for the trees. Mariella reels from these revelations.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise more amazingly... he knows them to be true... also the explanation fits so well he is amazed he did not see it already. At some level he already sensed it.

SHE- asks if Siaa can be made aware of the severity of the threat... the reality, actuality, certainty, factuality, certitude, and truth that the current infection is nothing compared to what is coming. If the Navaho also the Sioux had known what was coming for them... they never would have made those treaties. They would have fought to the last man.

Auleiha tells her mother that Mariella wants to speak to Siaa... to tell her about the aliens. Mo'at looked at Mariella for a long time. She knows he is here for a reason. Also... it must be it. She closes her eyes. It also opens them.

THE WELL OF SOULS. All the clans are gathered... filling the place... also spilling out into the forest surrounding it. They sit cross-legged... in concentric circles... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable growth rings in a tree. From the great convoluted brain of twisted roots beneath them... silken tendrils reach up... seeking the ends of the long queues hanging down the backs of the IV’AN. Mariella sits with Mo'at under the central willow. The entire congregation is

chanting slowly... also somebody is beating a drum at a steady rhythm.

Soon they are all connected also plugged into the Siaa mind. Mariella feels it... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to falling into a vast radiant sea.

SHE- starts to talk.

AT IVAN- there is total mobilization.

Ridgeville also Duartha has gone to a state of full emergency martial law. The shuttles have been called down from

the starship in orbit... also are being used as troop carriers.

The JF-17s are being fitted with cannons... also all Gynosphinxs are fully loaded... maximum weapons payload.

They cannot wait for an attack by an organized enemy... led by a renegade controller who is giving them inside information. They must take the fight to the rebels... also route them to their mountain stronghold.

They were caught by surprise last time...

indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they will not underestimate the enemy its time. Duartha is determined to blast the forest to kindling... if necessary... to reclaim the planet.

The Gynosphinxs are lined up... ready to fly. Behind them a squadron of JF-17s... also two Valkyrie shuttles... 30 armored power-suits... 101 regular CFOESE common soldier... 100 volunteers from amongst the construction also mining crews.

Also... Duartha in its Thunderbird commands the ship.

AT THE WELL OF SOULS, the people wait in silence for Siaa's answer. Then... slowly... the trees around them begin to pulse with faint radiant energy. The bioluminescence spreads throughout the roots until they grow indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a vast system of Fiber-Optics. They blaze white-hot in the night. The IV'AN responds... their bioluminescent spots grow brighter... until they are radiant beings in a sea of white light.

Then as the glow spreads through the forest indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a vast nervous system. In an aerial shot... it almost looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a city at night... with arteries of light indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable freeways. The

wave of luminosity spreads to the horizon in all directions.

FROM THE PROMETHEUS in orbit... we see the night side of the planet transformed into a vast reticulated lacework of faint luminosity. The continent... then the whole planet... are united in one vast energy field... terrifying in its scale as Siaa marshals her strength.

AT DAWN, THE GUNSHIPS fill the sky indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable bloated death beetles. They sweep toward

the Praying mountains in a thundering wave. The Valkyrie shuttles are the heavy transport of the operation... packed with troops... volunteers... also power-suits. The ships enter the shadow of Mons Veritatis. The Mountain of Truth.

The Valkyries land on Duartha's order... disgorging their troops into the forest. The power-suits spread out also advance in a cordon... with the armored common soldier behind. They scan the forest with infrared.

Lillie Wainfleet... walking point in its hydraulic suit... sees movement on its FLIR display... also reports it to Duartha.

IV’AN PEGASUS... advancing on them through the trees... 301 feet out.

The IV’AN attack mounted on dire-PEGASUS. The battle... which historians of two planets will call... in their separate tongues... THE BATTLE OF BIG ROCK-CALSOY MOUNTAIN has begun. Were Mariella has made love with her girlfriend the nights past- as one of the IV’AN.

The common soldier targets the PEGASUS on infrared... also they fire through the foliage. The dire-PEGASUS are cut down even before they get within bow range.

Duartha orders the gunships to rocket into the jungle.

Advancing information... the gunships fire streamers of fire ahead of them. The jungle explodes with fire bursts.

The pounding is merciless. Nahhas trees topple... also acres of rainforest are left burning.

The common soldier advance... firing flamethrowers also UGA 911 Tommy guns. The IV'AN is scattered or cut down. It seems a total route when- Duartha glances up.

Out of the sun come winged shapes. A whole squadron of them. The Hippocampus... invisible on the radar... dive out of the morning glare indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable birds of prey.

Leading the dive is a one-winged shape three times the size of the others. A GREAT LEONOPTERYX... a demon straight from Hell... blazing with scarlet... yellow also black stripes backlit by the morning sun. On its back... reining it by neural INTERCONNECTION is Mariella.

The creature riders slam into the gunships also JF-17s indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable falcons hitting fat turkeys. The air battle is joined.

The Gynosphinxs are not seriously damaged by the Hippocampus strikes. They separate of formation to pursue individual creature-riders... trying to hit them with cannons also rockets.

The Gynosphinxs bank after the creatures as they head for cover among

the floating mountains... or dive down into the trees.

Banking also moving furiously... the rays use obstacles indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the flanks of the floating mountains to slow the gunships... which are faster than they are.

A gunship... in a tight bank... fires its cannon. The rounds rip along a cliff face as the targeted creature swoops across it.

Two rays in full delta dive slam into a JF-17... shattering the canopy. The JF-17 spins out of control.

A Gynosphinx gunship gets on the tail of a creature. They wank also bank together... threading the needle between two floating islands. The gunship fires an air-to-air missile also the ray vanishes in an explosion.

Another creature-rider takes to the sheltering forest... zipping between the tree trunks as pursuing Gynosphinx rockets the jungle from above. The ray is hit by flying chunks of wood from an

exploding tree... also the rider cartwheels off.

The Gynosphinx... having scored a hit... pulls around looking for another mark.

WHAM!

A huge red shape slams down on it... knocking it tumbling. The Great Manticore coils around it... slashing furiously... as the ship tries to right itself. Mariella can barely hang on... all its mind-body take over muscles strained to the limit gripping the gyrating creature.

The pilot of the Gynosphinx sees nothing indistinguishable, close, near,

almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise the jaws of the king predator of the air slamming into its lexan canopy.

Mariella releases the gunship moments before they careen into a cliff. The pilot cannot recover. Its ship hits the face of the floating mountain also skids along with it... crippling the lifting turbines. The craft plummets toward the rainforest below... also there is a satisfying fireball.

The cliff face near Mariella explodes with cannon rounds also he

tucks dives. Screaming down on her is another Gynosphinx. The spiral downward... also Mariella can feel the rounds splitting the air around her. He rolls inverted, also dives under the edge of Mons Veritatis... then rolls out also zigzags through the dangling vines.

The gunship stays on her. It rips through the vines... also traces light the darkness under the floating mountain.

Mariella moves the Manticore around a thundering waterfall.

The gunship explodes right through the curtain of water.

It launches an air-to-air missile.

Mariella moves hard... diving. The missile hits a rock outcropping. The gunship follows Mariella through a narrow slit between Mons Veritatis, also a smaller floating island.

They run its slot rolled up on their sides to make the clearance. The gunship comes around a tight corner also breaks into the clear. The pilot has lost sight of the giant creature. A shadow crosses its canopy.

Out of the sun comes a crimson demon... shrieking over the roar of its turbines.

WHAM!

Leo slams the canopy of the ship. The Gynosphinx is driven downward in a dive.

The Manticore lashes at it... keeping a grip with claws also teeth. They spiral out of control. The powerful jaws rip open the canopy... breaking the latching mechanism. The pilot gags on FDF'n air.

Mariella kicks the gunship lose also it falls indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a

brick... breaking its back on a rocky promontory also exploding.

Two Hippocampus riders fall in beside Mariella. He signals... pointing to a target... also they bank together out of shot.

Kimberly Chacon flies the stolen JF-17 over the battle zone while Marcia De Los Santos videos the action with her stereo-cam. She is sending a live feed to the human base... pirate video journalism.

In the lab complex... the controllers watch the battle on a large screen... complete with Marcia's breathless narration.

Free media forever!

Back in the battle the gunships also the creatures are still corkscrewing all over the sky. A volunteer gunner fires its door gun out the side of a

JF-17. There is a CRASH also the ship is driven downward. The head of a- Hippocampus lunges into the open door from above... grabbing the gunner in its fanged mouth also jerking her out.

Another JF-17 dives after a creature. The pilot is a hotdog... following the ray down into the trees... under the canopy. They slalom through- the tree trunks at high speed.

The gunners hung half of the doors... firing their machine guns. Bark also leaves explode around the creature as it moves through the jungle. The creature dives under a huge tree limb... also the pilot follows. He looks up at the last second... catching a glimpse of Pink-skinned figures.

The- IV'AN hunters on the bough drop a net of woven vines after the creature-rider has gone through.

The JF-17 hit it. The net fouls the ship... causing it to flip over backward. It crashes upside down to the forest floor. KABOOM!! The IV'AN cheer. A moment

later they scatter like cannon fire rips into the tree around them.

Power-suit common soldier advances across the forest floor... firing their cannons also flamethrowers. The UGA 911s rip the forest to shreds.

Hydraulic feet pass the bodies of dire-PEGASUS also IV'AN hunters. The common soldier easily tracks the IV'AN through the brush on infrared. Running FDF'ns are cut down... disappearing in gouts of the earth also splintering wood.

The paratrooper on the far right of the firing line yells something. Out of the woods next to her... a monstrous

shape explodes in a shower of broken branches.

As the common soldier pivot... a WALL OF CHARGING ENFIELD TITANOTHERES crashes out of the foliage beside them.

Charging in from the flank... the titanotheres scatter the common soldier indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable bowling pins. Only a couple even have time to fire.

Several are pounded under the stampeding giants.

The tree-trunk- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable feet shatter the power-suit cockpits... also the common soldier is crushed or asphyxiated. The stampede thunders past... leaving the power-suits scattered also disorganized. They are left in a murky cloud of dust also floating leaf confetti.

Lillie is yelling orders... trying to get some control back.

SHE- tells them to spread out.

Two power-suits are charging together through the dusty… sun-dappled gloom… pursuing some running IV’AN hunters.

Something slams into one of the suits… tackling it out of frame. The other paratrooper whirls also see-!

The most awesome land predator the universe has ever conceived. The MANTICORE crouches over the fallen power suit… growling indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and

comparable a panther the size of a switch engine.

Its mantis- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable front limbs grip the struggling power-suit paratrooper indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a vice.

The standing paratrooper cannot fire without hitting its friend. He can only stare. Also, so he has time to see the

figure on the back of the beast. A Pink-skinned woman.

The manticore rips the power-suit gun arm off with its massive distensible jaws. Then the Gynosphinx tail arcs through the air… driving the stinger down indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a piledriver. It punches through the canopy. The struggling suit goes still.

The standing paratrooper raises its cannon indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise- the manticore leaps... blindingly fast... impossibly fast for something that size also- WHAM!! It has her in its mantis grip.

SHE- is face to face with its nightmare jaws...

right outside its canopy- The tail rises... poising to strike- C-CRACK!!

Auleiha drops the power-suit indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a pile of junk

also turns her demon mount. The manticore bounds into the foliage to stalk the other power-suits.

Nearby the armored foot-soldiers see living shadows flow out of the darkness, semidarkness, dark, gloominess, dimness, blackness, murk, shadows, shade, shadiness, obscurity, dusk, twilight, gloaming, and tenebrosity around them.

The VIPER-WOLVES race among them with flashing jaws. The common soldier fires wildly as they go down... hitting each other. The survivors break

also run as more viper-wolves come out of the shadows after them.

That moment starts an AIR BATTLE- RAGES- Duartha... directing operations from the Thunderbird... has lost track of a lot of its ships among the floating mountains. The IV'AN are fighting a dirty guerrilla war... luring its ships into single combat also ambushing them.

SHE- snaps the targeting system down over its eyes also takes over the gun system of the Thunderbird. SHE- tracks a banking creature rider also blows her out of the sky.

Mariella... flying its demon mount... looks around to see- A FLOTILLA OF MEDUSAE emerging around the flank of Mons Prometheus. The Nahhas gas-jellyfish glitter in the sun... big as ships.

CLOSER ON THE MEDUSAE. A second Manticore sweeps into view... ridden by Tsu Te. He signals to an IV'AN hunter who rides the top of the lead medusa. The female hunter has her queue plugged into a nerve center at the top dead center of the thing's huge bell.

She directs it to turn... also it pulses... coming slowly around. The other medusae are not ridden...

indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they follow mindlessly.

A Gynosphinx... banking around the flank of the Big Rock-Calsoy Mountain... finds itself tangled in a curtain of rubbery tentacles a hundred feet long.

The pilot tries to pull free as he looks up- In time to see more of the gasbags converging... their bells pulsing vigorously. More stringy tentacles wind

over the Gynosphinx. It twists also turns... trying to get free.

Tsu Te rides up near the unmanned medusas which are gripping the Gynosphinx. He waits until the tentacles have drawn it up near the gas bags... then fires a flaming arrow into the middle of them.

KA-BOOM!!

They go up to indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the Hindenburg in a Nahhas fireball which engulfs the Gynosphinx.

The gunship drops... bathed in the fire also giant- jellyfish parts. It hits the rocks below also the fuel explodes.

A pair of JF-17s pursues half a dozen creature-riders through the intermittent clouds which wreath Big Rock-Calsoy Mountain. They suddenly find themselves in a swarm of medusae. The JF-17s slowdown... looking for a way out of the pack of giant balloons. The creatures peel away... disappearing.

There is a flash of colored wings... an arc of fire... also then the balloons around them explode... each detonating the one next to it. The JF-17s

are consumed in an inferno of exploding hydrogen.

IN THE LAB back at the base... the controllers watch in amazement as the medusae explode.

They see the JF-17s fall indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable burning toys. A CFOESE paratrooper- strides in... shutting down the big monitor. He tells them to go to quarters until the emergency is over.

Hegner clubs her from behind with a computer keyboard.

The other controllers jump in... wrestling her down.

Spindly Nahha Harmon grabs the guy's gun also runs for the door... yelling.

THE INTERCONNECTION ROOM door is hurled open also the controller’s charge in... led by Harmon. Hegner barricades the door at the end of the connecting corridor then falls back to the Interconnection room.

SHE- seals the door there... also pushes lab equipment against it. The controllers scramble into their

INTERCONNECTION chairs... pulling the helmets down.

THE FOREST IS A SMOKY in the background the fires form HELL- as if the underworld has opened. Fires seem to burn all around. The common soldier is separated also disorganized.

Shooting at shadows.

IV’AN run along massive tree boughs... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable walkways through the canopy.

They fire arrows down at two power-suits walking below. The arrows are tipped with bladders of- sticky liquid... which- break over the power-suits.

A beat... while the common soldier inside tries to figure out what is going on. Then a flock- of Sting-bats descend on them... drawn to the attractant. They swarm so thickly around the bubble canopies that the common soldier is blinded. One of them blunders into a ravine. The other fires around her wildly... panicking.

SPLAT!

Bladders of attractive burst among a squad of the regular common soldiers also volunteers. Within seconds a swarm of HELLFIRE WASPS...

big as sparrows... is zipping around them. The squad scatters... screaming. A couple of them fall also do not get up. Lillie... nearby... is yelling at its intercom for a report.

Who is screaming? What is going on? A regular paratrooper near her jerks back as a SLINGER DART appears in its chest... piercing its ballistic armor.

A scream on its left also another man is taken down by a leaping SLINTH.

Lillie sees its striking head snap forward into the man's chest also knows he is dead. Lillie fires its cannon. The slinth flips convulsively amid flying earth also splintered bark.

Lillie stands there panting... looking around wildly... wondering what is going to come out of the jungle next.

AT THE BASE Nahha Harmon's mind-body take over sprints with powerful strides across the compound.

Inside... a CFOESE security squad blasts open the door to the corridor connecting to the Interconnection room.

They enter the corridor... advancing warily with their guns aimed.

K-RUNCH!! A bulldozer blade rips through the wall from outside. The corridor is flooded with lethal FDF'n air. The CFOESE guards are overcome... hacking also coughing.

They retreat... staggering back the way they came.

OUTSIDE Nahha pivots its bulldozer also advances on the CFOESE offices. SHE revs the giant machine also crashes straight into the wall.

The CFOESE OPERATIONS CENTER... from which the battle was being coordinated... is breached.

Ridgeville gapes as toxic air swirls in. Alarms go off.

The technicians flee their stations... ballooning the radar also communication equipment. They all make it out... sealing the door behind them. Ridgeville stands in the corridor... gasping. It is world unraveling. Nahha... enjoying it... gives it the gas also drives right into the Ops Center... turning the equipment to rubble.

IN THE JUNGLE regular common soldier also, volunteers ran to the ramp of the Valkyrie shuttle which was their landing craft. They are pursued by viper-wolves... some of which follow the last men into the ship.

The pilot hears screaming also yelling from the back compartment. SHE-panics... also starts an emergency takeoff.

The huge ship rises into a hover also accelerates forward.

Out of the trees comes a shiny black shape that leaps onto the nose of the shuttle. The Manticore fills the ship's front windows. The pilot screams as the

tail slams right through the canopy... shattering it.

OUTSIDE we see Auleiha also the manticore drop off the accelerating ship from a height of 14 feet. The manticore crashes down through foliage also lands agilely.

The shuttle accelerates out of control- It climbs out of the forest- inside... the pilot is dead at the controls... the co-pilot gagging on the poisonous air.

The shuttle hits the underside of Mons Veritatis. It explodes... also hundreds of tons of flaming debris drop back into the forest.

Duartha watches the wreckage falling. She orders the other shuttle to get out of the battle area. It is their only way of getting back to Prometheus... the ticket home.

Also, then he turns back to the battle. Also- you see in its face that he is over the edge. There is no logic in its brain now. Only death. Tsu Te glides its Manticore just beneath the cliff wall of the Big Rock-Calsoy Mountain. SHE- passes a broad waterfall... a shimmering curtain.

The Thunderbird gunship explodes out of the veil of water... bearing

down on Tsu Te with thundering turbines. Duartha opens with the cannon as Tsu Te banks its mount.

The rounds rip across the leo's wing... also the dying animal flutters indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a broken kite down into drifting clouds.

Mariella... circling above... sees Tsu Te get shot down.

The dying Manticore crashes down through the trees... lodging in branches high above the ground. Tsu Te

falls the rest of the way... clutching at vines as he tries to break its fall. SHE hits the ground... also lies there... severely injured.

Mariella's Manticore drops indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a MiG 28... slamming into the Thunderbird with an earsplitting screech.

The Thunderbird lurches... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a

muchness, and comparable wise is not-toppled indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the Gynosphinxs. It shakes off the stunned leonopteryx... also banks around to fire.

Mariella dives also the chase is on.

They also turn... dive also climb. Mariella dodges a fusillade of cannon fire also air-to-air missiles... more by luck than skill. He dives for the sheltering trees.

They zigzag through the obstacle course under the canopy of foliage. Mariella- leads the Thunderbird into a net trap.

The IV'AN dropped the net after he passes- Also the Thunderbird rips right through its indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable lace.

Mariella looks back. Uh oh. SHE- climbs hard... also the Thunderbird follows... ripping up the jungle around her. Mariella pushes Leo hard... climbing

into a cloud bank. The Thunderbird follows. The bank along a cliff wall... almost brushing the rock. The pilot of the Thunderbird loses sight of Mariella amongst a set of rocky spires. Duartha is scanning... looking for its target.

Mariella finishes its tight bank above the gunship also dives toward its broad back. He pulls out... skimming over the ship. Uncoupling its neural INTERCONNECTION... he rolls backward off the leonopteryx's back. Mariella hits... skidding... on the hull of the Thunderbird.

Duartha sees the Manticore zoom overhead also flap away from them. He

sends a missile after it also the scarlet demon vanishes in a fireball.

The huge gunship hovers... pivoting slowly as it scans for another target.

Mariella runs along the back of the thing... pulling two grenades from the bandolier. He pulls the pins with ‘its’ teeth. Then hurls them into the intakes.

BOOM!

BOOM!

The explosions ripped through the gunship's guts. It drops indistinguishable, close, near, almost

identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to an elevator. Mariella clings to a gun turret.

Out the side of the bubble canopy... Duartha sees- Mariella clinging to the ship ten feet from her. The pilot tries in vain to regain control.

The gunship blunders down through the treetops.

Mariella runs... diving out into space with everything he has- Grabbing an armful of lianas- SHE- plunges... ripping painfully along the vines as- The gunship crashes down through the trees

also- Mariella breaks its fall... hanging in a tangle of vines as- the gunship slams down into a small lake with a white explosion of water far below.

(BACK AT THE BASE-)

Ridgeville is at the end of its rope. He orders its ragged CFOESE guards to blow up the interconnection room.

Lynn Parrish puts a gun at Ridgeville's head also tells them all to drop their weapons.

Ridgeville cannot believe Parrish has suddenly decided to become a man of principle. Why start now?

indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise Parrish- has had enough of feeling sick at heart... also Ridgeville has gone too far. He tells her to keep its money.

The guards lower their guns on Ridgeville's orders.

AT THE JUNGLE LAKE the Thunderbird gunship lies half submerged.

Out of the water in the foreground. a shape rises. It is Duartha... wearing a power-suit.

He strides up out of the water... covered with mud. Its face... behind the canopy... is bloody also its eyes burn.

Duartha strides into the forest... looking for something to kill. He opens fire with the GAU 72... blasting the trees- around her into kindling. SHE- starts cutting a swath through the jungle in a lethal range.

TSU TE lies in a gasping heap. He has some broken bones.

SHE- looks up... grimacing... as a power-suit looms over her.

It is Lillie.

Wainfleet looks down at the fallen hunter. He reaches down also grabs Tsu Te by its queue... lifting her painfully.

Then he draws a huge knife with its other hydraulic corona.

He cuts Tsu Te's queue off near the base... scalping her.

Tsu Te screams in agony... its nervous system explodes overload. Lillie holds up the hair... Tsu Te's only connection to the world- consciousness which is its life's blood.

Lillie hears a chilling roar also a splintering crash. He looks around in time

to see a blurred black shape leap toward her in an explosion of foliage.

Auleiha's manticore is on her in one bound. It grips her... also the stinging tail rises. With blinding speed... it strikes over also down. CRACK! Right through the bubble canopy.

Lillie is skewered... pinned to the back of its cockpit. The venom goes through her... locking all its muscles in agonizing contraction. Auleiha drops her. She looks down at Tsu Te who... mercifully... is dead.

Auleiha hears firing nearby. She charges forward to meet the alien enemy.

On a collision course with-

DUARTHA... in its power-suit... moving relentlessly through the jungle. Its hydraulic boots clomp past the bodies of IV'AN dire-PEGASUS... a Hippocampus.

SHE- sees something through the dense foliage.

Moves to get a better look. It is the CABIN. He is in the IV'AN stronghold.

The defenders are dead. Duartha closes in on the Cabin.

INSIDE THE CABIN Mariella is tranced out... under the INTERCONNECTION.

Through a window... we see Duartha's power suit step into the clearing outside.

DUARTHA levels its UGA 911 at the Cabin- Its finger goes to the firing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wiseton- WHAM!!

A six-legged black demon tackles her. Duartha pivots as he falls... firing the cannon. It misses Auleiha by inches. He grapples with the manticore... keeping its mantis forelimbs from locking onto her.

The two titans’ twist also struggles.

Auleiha strikes with the tail. CRACK! It pierces the canopy indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise misses Duartha.

SHE- grabs a quick breath... holding it before the FDF’n air comes in. Duartha slams the manticore back against a tree trunk... almost crushing Auleiha. Then he twists violently... hurling the manticore off. It lands... twisting back on

itself almost indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness and comparable a Dove- Auleiha gathers for a leap as- Duartha raises the Gatling gun also- The manticore launches at her also- BOOM!!

The GAU 72- rips into its belly. Duartha holds the trigger down... drilling hundreds of rounds into the thing... up its chest to the fearsome head.

The manticore slumps to the ground... pinning Auleiha's legs under its great bulk. She is trapped.

Duartha grabs its breathing mask also gulps air.

Then he looks down at Auleiha. SHE- aims the cannon at her... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise when he fires it rotates harmlessly... empty. He steps toward her also- a figure drops from a limb above... between her also Auleiha.

It is Mariella.

The renegade mind-body takes over charges straight at the power-suit... which towers over her.

In corona-to-corona combat... Mariella also Duartha fight to the death.

It is a knockdown drag-out fight. Mariella has the speed also agility... indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise Duartha has the power... also he moves well in the suit. Mariella is pummeled. At one point the battle takes them near the Cabin.

Mariella swings a log indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a

muchness, and comparable a club... knocking Duartha back.

The power suit crashes against the Cabin... shaking it violently. Inside... Human Mariella is jarred so hard the INTERCONNECTION is momentarily broken.

Mariella... Mind-body take over drops indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a puppet with the strings cut.

Human Mariella pulls the headset back down also re-establishes the

INTERCONNECTION. The mind-body takes over rolls away just as a hydraulic boot slam down. She springs to its feet only to duck a pile- driver punch.

Auleiha struggles to free herself from beneath the manticore's body. Mariella also Duartha grapple... also the power suit finally pins Mariella against a rock.

Duartha pulls back its arm for a crushing blow- Auleiha leaps into the shot... grabbing the arm- Mariella's corona flashes up... hitting the rescue- release- The canopy pops also Mariella

forces it open- SHE- hits the power switch also the suit goes dead.

One powerful mind-body take over arm grabs Duartha also yanks her out indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a soft oyster from a shell. Duartha stares at her through its breathing mask. Waiting for the lethal blow.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable wise Mariella just cocks its head.

Listening- She hears something in the forest nearby.

He sets Duartha down... also the CFOESE commander staggers back. Mariella motions for her to go. Also- Duartha runs.

SHE crashes through the foliage indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the demons of Underworld are after her.

Which... unfortunately... they are. Duartha sees the viper wolves flowing from shadow to shadow behind her... around her.

Two come out onto the trail ahead of her. The circle closes in. The viper wolves bare their glass indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable distending fangs.

Hideous hyena laughter... then a blur of motion.

Mariella also Auleiha discerns the scream through the trees. Then silence... except for the Nahhaal sounds of the forest.

They hug each other. The battle is over. They have won.

AT IVAN, the mind-body takeovers have secured the base also established control. They stand guard with weapons as the hurl survivors of the battle are marched onto the shuttle.

HUMAN MARIELLA watches as Ridgeville also its whole corrupt outfit aboard the shuttle.

Mariella has given an edict: The base is being closed. When the hurls are all back on Prometheus the last shuttle will be destroyed so no-one can come back.

Prometheus will go back to Earth.

So-o it is a time for goodbyes. Also... decisions. Mariella has decided to stay... also so have several of the other controllers. Siessah is leaving.

Also... all the other hurls are being told to leave. Thanks. Do not let the door hit you in the butt on the way out.

Marcia does her last down INTERCONNECTION to Earth BEFORE

THE END. Mariella... is on camera; tells whoever is watching that the natural defenses... the immune system... of FDR will not allow hurls to set foot here again.

Just indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the cold also flu counter viruses were created; a new virus will be created.

It will be a virus lethal to hurls. An airborne hemorrhagic fever. A flesh-eating virus from Hell. If it gets back to Earth because of future expeditions

here... the whole hurl race will die to scream. FDR is off-limits for all time.

Marcia also Kimberly hugs Mariella’s head for the airfield.

The shuttle takes off... its sun-bright lance of fire climbing into the evening sky.

There is not a virus indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable that is there?

MARIELLA- (With a little smile) It could happen.

(NIGHT AT THE WELL AND POND OF EMOTIONS BY THE GARDENS.)

The willows glow softly. Hundreds of torches light the congregated congregation of clans. Mo'at stands at the central willow... in communion with Siaa. The IV’AN sit in their concentric rings... also connected.

30

The camera starts wide... seeing the hundreds of softly chanting figures in the great circle. It swoops in toward the center until it is hovering... looking down at two figures lying on the ground.

Mariella also its mind-body take overlie head-to-head. Hurl Mariella is wearing a mask... connected to a rebreather which is lying beside her. Both figures are still... with coronae folded on their chests. The silken threads cover them both.

They lie cocooned indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable moths.

We see Auleiha... Jan also Naden stalling near the bodies. At the edge of

the inner circle... the other controllers sit... cross-legged... watching intently.

As the camera moves in Auleiha moves forward... kneeling next to Mariella's human form. Now we see only-Auleiha also the two Mariella. She gently Link-up the mask from the human Mariella's face. She is not breathing. She bends also kisses her.

The camera drifts down past her... centering on Mariella's mind-body takeover. Moving into full close-up. Auleiha moves next to Mariella's mind-body takeover. Her corona comes into the frame... stroking its cheek. TIGHTENING

slowly to link up- close-up until- her eyes open... as the new baby she saw being made as to the other life.

(A year has passed)

LASTLY- IV'AN GIRL'S AND GIRLFRIENDS, Like Mariella- CAN MATE, MEANING THE FRIST REAL HUMAN- were one or the other is the birth mother- and an IV'ANUMAN CHLID WAS MADE- IN LOVE NOT SIN- unlike on the dying Earth they knew before.